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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE MIRTH IS TURNED INTO WEEPING:
EVELYN WAUGH, CATHOLIC NOVELIST

BY

CATRIONA de SCOSSA ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY.

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

Edmonton, Alberta

Fall 1992

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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled THE MIRTH IS TURNED INTO WEEPING: EVELYN WAUGH, CATHOLIC NOVELIST submitted by CATRIONA de SCOSSA in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY.

B. Stovel

M. Legris

E. Bishop

J. McMaster

E. Waugh

J. Kertzer

May 14/92

For
Norman Page,
with whom this began,
J.R., H.S. and S.P.S-S.
who made an end possible,
and to the memory of
Evelyn Waugh
in the hope that he would have found this
"O.K.E.W."

ABSTRACT

It is widely held by Evelyn Waugh's readers and critics that he became a "Catholic novelist" when he wrote and published *Brideshead Revisited* (1944/1945). That this is not the case, and that Waugh was a Catholic novelist from the time he wrote *Decline and Fall* in 1928, is the principal argument of this thesis. To make this point his novels *Decline and Fall*, *Vile Bodies* (1930), *Black Mischief* (1932), *A Handful of Dust* (1934), *Scoop: a Novel About Journalists* (1938), *Put Out More Flags* (1942), *Brideshead Revisited: The Sacred and Profane Memories of Captain Charles Ryder*, *The Loved One: an Anglo-American Tragedy* (1948), *Helena* (1950), *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* (1957) and *Sword of Honour* (1965), together with the fragmentary novel, *Work Suspended* (1942), have been examined and explicated. His life, especially in its Catholic aspects, has also been carefully considered. All this has been done in a context provided by his non-fiction, received critical opinion, and documents relating to such significant events as the Second Vatican Council.

Chapter One makes the case for the legitimacy of the term "Catholic novelist"; explores Waugh's Roman Catholic background, influences and vocation, beginning in early childhood; presents and comments on a broad range of criticism and other secondary source material to show that there is a place for this thesis; explains the strategies and critical method adopted to further the argument. Chapter Two examines Waugh's novels written between 1928 and 1942, showing the presence of Catholic content from the beginning. Chapter Three is an *explication de texte* of *Brideshead Revisited*, not only as a Catholic novel, but also as a fictional enactment of the Office of Tenebrae, showing that it is "steeped in theology." Chapters Four, Five and Six are devoted to *Helena*, *The Loved One* and *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*, and *Sword of Honour* respectively, presenting Waugh's move from Catholic joy to Catholic despair as changes in the Roman Catholic Church, particularly in the liturgy,

reached their zenith with the declarations of Vatican II. The conclusion recounts Waugh's inability to write, coinciding with his shaken but not abandoned faith. It explains his grief and his tenacious clinging to the remnants of his Roman Catholicism which, together, deprived him entirely of his capacity to continue writing as a Catholic novelist.

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For S.P.S-S., my thanks are in a footnote.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Primary Sources

BM	*Black Mischief*
BR	*Brideshead Revisited*
DF	*Decline and Fall*
D	*Diaries*
E	*Essays*
H	*Helena*
HD	*Handful of Dust*
L	*Letters*
LL	*A Little Learning*
LO	*The Loved One*
OGP	*Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*
POMF	*Put Out More Flags*
Sc	*Scoop*
SH	*Sword of Honour*
VB	*Vile Bodies*
WS	*Work Suspended*

Secondary Sources

CH	*Critical Heritage*. Ed. Martin Stannard
Da	*Evelyn Waugh: Writer*. Robert Murray Davis
EWHW	*Evelyn Waugh and His World*. Ed. David Pryce-Jones
He	*The Picturesque Prison*. Jeffrey Heath
Li	*The Writings of Evelyn Waugh*. Ian Littlewood
P	*Evelyn Waugh's Officers, Gentlemen and Rogues*. Gene D. Phillips
S	*Evelyn Waugh: A Biography*. Christopher Sykes
St	*Evelyn Waugh: Portrait of an Artist*. Frederick J. Stopp

CHAPTER I

Introduction

On February 5, 1945, Evelyn Waugh wrote of *Brideshead Revisited* to his mother: "The general criticism is that it is religious propaganda. That shows how opinion has changed in 80 years. No one now thinks a book which totally excludes religion is atheist propaganda. 80 years ago every novel included religion as part of the normal life of the people" (L, 200). This comment neatly sums up widely held critical opinion about Waugh's best-known novel, and also gives insight into his sense of his own work. Few disagree that Waugh was a Catholic novelist by the time he wrote *Brideshead Revisited* in 1944, but the large majority of critics is convinced that this description fits his work only from this period. The principal object of this thesis is to show that, by contrast with critical consensus, from the moment Waugh began his career as a novelist he was a *Catholic* novelist.

Before beginning this task, however, it needs to be shown that there is such a creature as a "Catholic writer," a "Catholic novelist." For Graham Greene, a good friend to Waugh and a fellow Catholic, whose novels frequently have Catholic themes and characters, denied that *he* was anything but a Catholic who wrote:

> I don't know why people insist on labelling me a Catholic writer. I'm simply a Catholic who happens to write.... There does exist a pattern in my carpet constituted by Catholicism, but one has to stand back to make it out.... In most of my novels one can find a religious influence.[1]

However, a little later in this conversation with Marie-Françoise Allain, Greene, who, in an obituary described Waugh as, "the greatest novelist of my generation,"[2] contradicts himself. Asked if he feels closer to French *Catholic writers* [my emphasis] than his "English colleagues" he responds:

> I was very close to Evelyn Waugh, whose Catholicism was so orthodox that it clashed with mine. But, strangely enough, we never quarrelled in spite of substantial disagreements in the field of politics as well. Evelyn was a conservative right down the line. I made him very unhappy with *A Burnt-Out Case*: he concluded from it that I'd lapsed from the Faith.[3]

Greene goes on to say that, "I appreciate Anthony Burgess.... I don't consider him a *Catholic writer* [my emphasis] though." He continues, "I can think of hardly any *Catholic writers* [my emphasis] with whom I feel an affinity. Bernanos...made a strong impression on me, but I discovered him after the war, too late to have been influenced by him. The same is true of Mauriac...."[4]

Three times Greene uses the term "Catholic writer" to describe novelists, or to deny that Burgess is one. He also responds directly to a question about Catholic writers, even though he had earlier repudiated the description for himself. Consequently it seems perfectly proper that the subtitle of this thesis should be *Evelyn Waugh, Catholic Novelist*.

In his comparative study of the work of François Mauriac and Graham Greene, *Faith and Fiction*, Philip Stratford quotes both novelists who, together, help define the term "Catholic writer": Mauriac writes, "Doubtless our raison d'être, the thing that gives validity to our absurd and strange profession, is the creation of a fictional world through which real men may see more clearly into their hearts, and may feel towards one another more comprehension and pity." Greene adds: "The creative act seems to remain a function of the religious mind."[5] Some readers and critics may doubt the presence of pity in Waugh's novels, especially the earlier ones, but pity and pathos are there, and to be discussed in Chapter Two. What I hope to show above all is that Waugh had a double vocation as writer and as Catholic or rather, that the two became inextricably one--Catholic novelist. The double truth of this is to be seen as Waugh's novels are examined. That he was, more

broadly, a Catholic writer is admirably shown in this excerpt from "Felix Culpa?" (1948), the review of Greene's *The Heart of the Matter*, that Waugh wrote eighteen years after his conversion:

> It is a book which only a Catholic could write and only a Catholic can understand. I mean that only a Catholic can understand the nature of the problem. Many Catholics, I am sure, will gravely misunderstand it, particularly in the United States of America, where its selection as the Book of the Month will bring it to a much larger public than can profitably read it. There are loyal Catholics here and in America who think that it is the function of the Catholic writer to produce only advertising brochures setting out in attractive terms the advantages of Church membership. To them this profoundly reverent book will seem a scandal. For it not only portrays Catholics as unlikeable human beings but shows them as tortured by their Faith.... The author has said: 'These characters are not my creation but God's. They have an eternal destiny. They are not merely playing a part for the reader's amusement. They are souls whom Christ died to save.'... Scobie is the complement of Pinkie. Both believe in damnation and believe themselves damned. Both die in mortal sin as defined by moral theologians. The conclusion of the book is the reflection that no one knows the secrets of the human heart or the nature of God's mercy. It is improper to speculate on another's damnation. Nevertheless the reader is haunted by the question: Is Scobie damned? One does not really worry very much about whether Becky Sharp or Fagin is damned. It is the central question of *The Heart of the Matter*. (E, 361-63)[6]

No one could doubt that this review was written by a Catholic writer, few doubt that *Brideshead Revisited* was written by a Catholic novelist, and, largely thanks to Graham Greene, the fact that there are Catholic writers, Catholic novelists, has been shown. That Waugh was essentially a Catholic novelist from the start of his career as a writer of fiction has not been demonstrated fully to date. To gather evidence in the hope of making this point, I propose to examine all Waugh's major works of fiction--*Decline and Fall* (1928),[7] *Vile Bodies* (1930),[8] *Black Mischief* (1932),[9] *A Handful of Dust* (1934),[10] *Scoop* (1938),[11] *Put Out More Flags* (1942),[12] *Brideshead Revisited* (1945),[13] *The Loved One* (1948),[14] *Helena* (1950),[15] *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* (1957)[16] and *Sword of Honour* (1965).[17] This last is Waugh's

recension of what began as a trilogy *Men at Arms* (1952),[18] *Officers and Gentlemen* (1955)[19] and *Unconditional Surrender* (1961),[20] known as *The End of the Battle*[21] in the United States. I have chosen to consider the recension because it was Waugh's final reworking of the war trilogy, as its title page makes clear. It reads: *The Final Version of the Novels*--and is the one that he chose to be his finished product. The fragment *Work Suspended* (1942)[22] will also be examined, for although it was never completed and only two chapters were finished, Waugh intended that it should be a full-length novel. The fact that several critics believe this to be a pivotal piece of work in Waugh's career, adds to its importance.[23] The long short stories or novellas, *Scott-King's Modern Europe* (1947), and *Love Among the Ruins* (1953), are by their nature excluded from what is to be an examination of Waugh's novels.

If it is possible that Waugh *was* a Catholic novelist for the *whole* of his adult career as a writer of fiction, there must be some supporting evidence from the time prior to his conversion to Catholicism in 1930. Such evidence does seem to exist. Before he reached his teens Waugh had produced a bad, but distinctly Catholic, poem: "I was much impressed by Newman's *Dream of Gerontius*, which found its way into the house in an edition illustrated in the *art nouveau*, and in emulation composed a deplorable poem in the metre of *Hiawatha*, named *The World to Come*, describing the experiences of a soul immediately after death" (LL, 93). Waugh's subject was Newman's, and Newman wrote his undeniably Catholic poem in 1865, twenty years after he was received into the Roman Catholic Church.

It was not only Waugh's reading and writing that was imbued with Roman Catholicism. In an interview on the B.B.C. television programme "Face to Face" on June 26, 1960 he told John Freeman: "Well, I think I'd always - that is to say always from the age of 16 or so - realised that Catholicism was Christianity, that all the other forms of Christianity

were only good so far as they chipped little bits off the main block."[24] His son Auberon, in a letter to Gene D. Phillips, written between 1966 and 1975, said: "I have no doubt that his Catholicism coloured and gave depth and purpose to *all* [my emphasis] his writing" (P, 52).[25]

Another, more subtle, Catholic influence was very much present in his life from his early school days--his interest in illuminated manuscripts. As a young child he liked "Egyptian mummies, illuminated manuscripts, mediaeval weapons" (LL, 54). He copied from "Shaw's *Alphabets* (illuminated letters reproduced from mediaeval manuscripts)" (LL, 60) and later, at the age of fourteen, met "the scribe" Edward Johnston, who, though not himself a Catholic, had "joined Eric Gill's small group of Catholic craftsmen who lived by the rule of the Third Order of St. Dominic" (LL, 145-46). He continued to work with his first human, as opposed to manuscript mentor, Francis Crease, who told him, "You come to me wearing socks of the most vulgar colours and you have just written the most beautiful E since the Book of Kells" (LL, 148). More crucially, anyone who has even glanced at mediaeval illuminated manuscripts knows that the vast majority of them are *Catholic* Books of Hours, and that their pages are filled with images of the Virgin, saints, martyrs and all the dazzling and fascinating detail of mediaeval Catholic symbolism.[26] They are glorious picture books of the history of the Catholic Church and faith. Not only this, but "Books of Hours originat[ed] in the Church's liturgy, the daily "Divine Office of the Church."[27] It seems possible that the interest in the liturgy which was to give Waugh so much joy and, latterly, caused him so much pain was the passion of a lifetime.

Waugh's exultation in the Latin liturgy and his angry sorrow when the Second Vatican Council finally approved liturgical use of vernaculars is to be examined more closely later on. However, the changing times and the changing rites, the new fashion in liturgy, had a

profound and damaging effect on Waugh and should be described briefly here. In 1962 in "The Same Again, Please" he wrote:

> [The fashion] has been set by a strange alliance between archaeologists absorbed in their speculations on the rites of the second century, and modernists who wish to give the Church the character of our own deplorable epoch. In combination they call themselves liturgists.... For centuries [the services for the end of Holy Week and for Easter] had been enriched by the devotions which were dear to the laity - the anticipation of the morning Office of Tenebrae, the vigil at the Altar of Repose, the Mass of the Presanctified.
>
> During the last few years we have experienced the triumph of the 'liturgists' in the new arrangement of the[se] services.... The significance of Easter as a feast of the dawn is quite lost, as is the unique character of Christmas as the Holy Night. I have noticed in the monastery I frequent a marked falling-off in the number of retreatants since the innovations or, as the liturgists would prefer to call them, the restorations. (E, 606-07)

The changes had come about as a result of the deliberations of the highest authorities within the Church, at the instigation of Pope John XXIII (E, 617),[28] but the move to change had, as Waugh noted, been developing for decades:

> The sacred Council has set out to impart an ever-increasing vigor to the Christian life of the faithful; to adapt more closely to the needs of our age those institutions which are subject to change; to foster whatever can promote union among all who believe in Christ; to strengthen whatever can help to call all mankind into the Church's fold. Accordingly it sees particularly cogent reasons for undertaking the reform and promotion of the liturgy.[29]

Lest it be assumed that Waugh's devotion to the Latin liturgy and, hence, the nature of his conversion, was aesthetic rather than a matter of belief and fidelity, his friend Christopher Sykes' report that Waugh was tone-deaf should be noted (S, 433).[30] Even more significant is his instructor Father Martin D'Arcy's account of his approach to conversion:

> Evelyn...never spoke of experience or feelings. He had come to learn and understand what he believed to be God's revelation, and this made talking with him an interesting discussion based primarily on reason. I have never myself met a convert who so strongly based his assents on truth. It was a special pleasure to make contact with so able a brain. Nor, though he writes about 'little emotion,' was his conversion so very matter of fact, because it proved to be an illumination and an inspiration. Hard, clear thinking had with

> the help of grace given him the answer for which he had been searching.... (EWHW, 64)

Waugh's disciplined and intellectual approach to Catholicism has often been ignored by his critics, who then tend to be led astray by their own opinions. This is particularly true of *Brideshead Revisited*, which caused Edmund Wilson to foam at the mouth, and a number of other critics, conveniently summarised by Frederick Stopp, to write with less than considered critical appraisal:

> 'Love, the English aristocracy and the Roman Catholic Church combine to liquefy a style that should be dry,' said Dame Rose Macaulay. Her selection of passages to show the lushness which came over the author when writing of these hallowed subjects - and of food - drove the point home. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that Mr. Waugh's reputation among the critics has hardly yet recovered from the blow dealt by *Brideshead*. The charge is that Mr. Waugh has abandoned his old detachment, and has declared his loyalties - excellent things, loyalties, comments Mr. O'Faolain, but fatal for an artist. 'A religious theme given institutional treatment is always liable to get lost in the embroidered folds of ecclesiasticism', is his comment on *Brideshead*. In stylistic terms the charge is that he has abandoned the stringency of satire for the sweetness of romanticism. Mr. Waugh, says Mr. Mikes, is 'a powerful satirist but only a mediocre missionary.... In *Edmund Campion* and *Helena* he stands on a pair of spiritual buskins and can be incredibly dull.' 'Even Saint Helena is made tolerable only by being represented as a Miserere Mei in her youth and a bit of a fool in her old age', says Mr. O'Faolain again.[31]

Stopp himself, usually an acute critic, is limited by the fact that Waugh continued to live and work for eight years after Stopp's book was published. But Stopp also has the unique qualification of being the only critic both approved by Waugh and invited to be a guest in his house whilst working.

Much more dispassionate, and so more valuable than Stopp's trio, is Alvin B. Kernan's essay "Running in Circles: The Early Novels of Evelyn Waugh." Kernan argues, however, that order, any sort of order, was what appealed to Waugh, rather than the very precisely defined order of the Catholic Church:

> It is, I believe, impossible to discover in Waugh's early novels any specific social arrangements or absolute set of values which he espouses and uses as a standard for measuring the failure of modern life. The pomposity of the old regime is always as ridiculous and self-defeating as the grotesque antics of the new men, and the bits of more ancient history which appear here and there suggest that in Waugh's view human beings have seldom been more gifted or capable of handling things much better than they do in the twentieth century. What Waugh seems to value is order in social and personal life - not any particular order, but order.[32]

In truth, the order of orthodoxy always meant a good deal to Waugh. This will clearly be seen later in examinations of novels as diverse, but so similarly circular in form, as *Decline and Fall* (1928) and *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* (1957). In the former the hero abandons heterodoxy and sees, like his inventor, "that catholicism is the enemy of Catholicism" (L, 303). In the latter the trembling rock of Mr. Pinfold's faith stabilises.

Waugh's desire for order is even more clearly visible in his essays and articles. As a convert to the Catholic Church in 1930 Waugh believed, as he wrote in "Converted to Rome," that he had to make the choice "between Christianity and Chaos....Christianity is essential to civilization....Christianity exists in its most vital form in the Roman Catholic Church" (E, 103-04). Waugh had chosen not simply Christianity; he had chosen Catholicism. Time and again Waugh has restated, in different words, the necessity of an ordering, historically founded Church. For Waugh's sense of Catholic order is founded on his sense of history. In 1949, in "The American Epoch in the Catholic Church" Waugh wrote: "...the Christian, when he dates his letters from the Year of Our Lord, is affirming his Faith. He is placing the Incarnation where for him it must always stand, in the centre of human history.... The Incarnation restored order" (E, 377). He reiterated the historicity of the Incarnation in a letter to Lady Diana Cooper in 1964. "Do you believe in the Incarnation & Redemption in

the full historical sense in which you believe in the battle of El Alamein? That's important. Faith is not a mood" (L, 624).

Twenty-one years after his conversion, in 1951, Waugh's faith, in the Pope's words, quoted by Waugh, still represented order. He wrote, in "In Defence of the Holy Places":

> ...by a double act of aggression as flagrant as the invasion of South Korea, [Jerusalem] has become a battle-ground temporarily divided between two irreconcilable enemies. One voice only is heard reproaching the nations for their betrayal - the Pope's; but he speaks as always in terms of generations and centuries. When he says that internationalization is the only proper solution of the problem he does not mean that it is expedient to evict the usurpers immediately. The great opportunity has been lost. It will come back one day on the tide of history. Meanwhile the Holy City stands as a chilly monument to the moral confusion of our rulers. (E, 410-11)

In 1962 Waugh reviewed John Osborne's *Luther*, a play about a man he regarded as a traitor, a revolutionary and a criminal. Describing the proper, for him, outcome of the Reformation, Waugh notes that the Council of Trent was the appropriately historical and ordered "means God appointed for the process" (E, 579) of cleansing and restoring the Catholic Church. Protestantism was not reform, but the diseased product of disorder.

Ten years after Kernan's article, in 1975, Gene D. Phillips, S.J., published Evelyn Waugh's *Officers, Gentlemen, and Rogues*, subtitled *The Fact Behind his Fiction*. It might be expected that, as a Jesuit, he would delve deeply into Waugh's Catholicism, but he does not. He recognises, as he must, that Waugh is a Catholic writer, but he regards *Brideshead Revisited* as his "first explicitly religious novel..." (P, 51). In this he follows A.A. DeVitis, who wrote *Roman Holiday* (1958) on the basis of this premise.[33] Phillips' principal argument is that

> ...the publication of Waugh's diary is one of the great literary events of the century. Virginia Woolf is the only other major twentieth-century novelist to have left such a complete personal record.... My own opinion is that Waugh

> himself very likely would not have published his diary, if for no other reason than that it would make the task of future literary critics too easy! (P, x/xii)

For Phillips, the publication of Waugh's diaries allows him "to demonstrate how Waugh's personal life and viewpoint became part of his fiction" (P, 157). Phillips' undertaking differs from mine in that it is Waugh's religious life and viewpoint which concern me. Phillips, by contrast, paid scant attention to the importance of Waugh's Catholicism in the shaping of his novels. Another problem, one that Phillips could not have foreseen, stems from his reliance on Waugh's diaries as sources of accurate information, something I have tried to avoid as much as possible.[34] As Waugh's neighbour and frequent guest Frances Donaldson points out, in the Preface to the second edition of *Evelyn Waugh: Portrait of Country Neighbour* (1985), his diaries seem deliberately misleading:

> ...in his diaries he portrays himself as at least as odious as the worst of his detractors do, and almost constantly drunk. The most penetrating of psychologists would be at pains to explain what impelled him to write these travesties of his own character and of the events of the day, based, in the experience of so many people, only remotely on the truth.
> ...one did not go to his house in fear of what his mood might be, but in anticipation of pleasure.[35]

As well, Phillips did not have easy access to Waugh's letters either; they were not published, even in part, until 1980.[36]

To a much greater degree than Phillips, Jeffrey Heath, in *The Picturesque Prison: Evelyn Waugh and His Writing* (1982), concerns himself with Waugh's Catholicism. Heath says himself, "Above all, I have stressed Waugh's interest in religion.... In my view Waugh's novels are satires rooted in a Christian and ultimately a Roman Catholic vision of history, in which the contemporary world is a hollow caricature of an unseen realm and a bleak parody of the more substantial past" (He, xiii). Although Waugh's Catholicism and his

view of history are certainly fundamental to his novels, Heath's account is flawed by inaccuracies and misunderstandings. To give one example, Heath claims that:

> Waugh held a dual view of World War II. On the one hand it was a prison created by the excesses of the Twenties and Thirties - excesses which turned England into an asylum full of encaged lunatics like the ones Ryder contemplates in the Prologue [to *Brideshead Revisited*]. On the other hand, influenced perhaps by Eliot in "Little Gidding," Waugh regarded the war as the purgatorial fire which would cleanse England and return it to the path it had left in the reign of Elizabeth I. On a national plane, Ryder's return to Catholicism looks forward to the end of the Anglican digression in England. And on a personal level it represents the return of the house of Waugh to the Catholicism of its forefathers; Evelyn Waugh, the right-minded father, supersedes Arthur Waugh, the last of the apostate fathers. (He, 183)

Several times in this short paragraph Heath is incorrect. Charles Ryder did not "return to Catholicism"; he embraced it for the first time, as is made entirely plain by a simple reading of *Brideshead Revisited*. England left its Catholic path in the reign of Henry VIII, beginning in 1533, and though Catholicism was briefly restored during Mary Tudor's reign, 1553-1558, on the *cuius regio, eius religio* principle, it left the path for the *second* time when Queen Elizabeth's reign began in 1558. In Waugh's autobiography, *A Little Learning* he devotes six pages (LL, 3-8) to his clerical forebears, going back several generations. He mentions nine names, eight being Protestants, frequently clerics. The ninth is a woman, "Theodosia...alone among my immediate forebears...a Roman Catholic" (LL, 304). And this foremother was an apostate Protestant. Although Waugh's attitude to T.S. Eliot was somewhat ambivalent, it seems unlikely that the profoundly Catholic Waugh would be influenced by a Protestant poem composed by an Anglican poet about a Protestant religious group. The cleansing fire Heath speaks of sounds more like the idea of gallantly impassioned Mr. Goodall of Waugh's *Men at Arms* (1952), with his hope of a Modern Pilgrimage of Grace, than of the Waugh who imagined him.[37]

This thesis somewhat resembles Heath's text, for, as Bruce Stovel has pointed out, his "book is of a familiar kind, a life-and-works explication of themes,"[38] as is my own enquiry. In Stovel's view, however, *The Picturesque Prison* exhibits "tone-deafness," missing the irony and the playfulness in Waugh's work.[39] This thesis too must often dwell on the gloomier aspects of Waugh's work, as it deals with Waugh as a Catholic novelist, rather than as a humorist or satirist. Though Waugh's Catholic life began in joy, it ended in despair, and this is very much evident in the novels. Still, the thesis's lugubrious title, *The Mirth is Turned Into Weeping*, a pastiche and a small joke, is taken from perhaps his funniest novel, *Decline and Fall*. The omissions of much of the fun and the sparkle are made knowingly, and a little regretfully, on the assumption that Waugh's Catholic themes are the counterpoint of his novels and until counterpoint is understood, a sometimes less than cheerful undertaking, the full harmony cannot properly be enjoyed. Besides, Waugh's funniest novels are not without pathos. Prendergast in *Decline and Fall* makes one howl with laughter when, as the drunken time-keeper at Llanabba Castle school sports day, he revels in having shot little Lord Tangent. But the same man weeps with unaccustomed pleasure when invited for dinner in an hotel, and one is inclined to weep with him and for him.

With the exception of four writers, Waugh's critics in this decade have not, for the most part, served him well. The first of the exceptions is Robert Murray Davis, who published *Evelyn Waugh: Writer* (1981), an invaluable work of textual criticism, with a slightly ghoulish title, the epitaph on Waugh's tombstone (Da, x).[40] Davis is the first scholar to make extensive use of Waugh's manuscripts to provide a backdrop and a solid foundation for the study of Waugh's fiction. As Davis explains:

> These and other kinds of evidence serve to establish the personal and intellectual contexts from which the major novels grew and to reveal the process by which Waugh arrived at major decisions about external structure, about the invention and ordering of plot, about the creation and alteration of character for thematic purposes, about verbal and symbolic motifs, and about adjustments to tone and rhythm all the way from individual sentences to scenes, sections, and in his consistent practice of revising the conclusion after finishing the manuscript, of novels as artistic wholes. (Da, ix)

Evelyn Waugh: Writer is essential reading for anyone intending to work with Waugh's manuscripts. In the passage just quoted Davis mentions one of his smaller purposes--"alteration of character." This was my large purpose for examining some of Waugh's manuscripts.

Ian Littlewood's *The Writings of Evelyn Waugh* (1983) is a useful source of critical ideas about Waugh's work *in toto*.[41] However, it deals seldom and not particularly profoundly with the Catholic aspects of Waugh's *oeuvre*, the essential part of this thesis. Similarly, George McCartney's *Confused Roaring: Evelyn Waugh and the Modernist Tradition* (1987), though carefully researched and argued, pays scant attention to the religious elements in Waugh's novels, and approaches them from a largely cinematographic perspective, and so is not particularly relevant to this undertaking.[42] Davis's *Evelyn Waugh and the Forms of His Time* (1989) is a broadly ranging collection of essays, pursuing the idea that

> Waugh's supposed nostalgia for the Edwardian age was not peculiar to his idiosyncratic Tory Catholicism but was shared by a number of writers whose opinions, or the critical perception of them, were quite different. If Waugh were to be understood rather than defended, it seemed clear and now seems even clearer he would have to be seen in the historic contexts of his class, his generation and his chosen genres.[43]

Once again Davis is essential reading, but here he ranges more broadly than this thesis.

Although not a critical work, except in the same minor way as the *Diaries* and *Letters*, Donat Gallagher's *The Essays, Articles and Reviews of Evelyn Waugh* (1983) deserves mention as it is a boon to scholars and to Waugh's general readers alike.[44]

Jacqueline McDonnell's *Waugh On Women* (1986) is the first of the less consequential and not particularly scholarly productions of this period.[45] Here is a pugnacious study of Waugh's female characters, the title being descriptive of her partisan approach to the topic. Two years later Paul Doyle's *Reader's Companion to the Novels and Short Stories of Evelyn Waugh* (1988) appeared.[46] It is rife with mistaken definitions, misspellings, partial definitions and blind references. For example, one is referred from the incorrectly spelled "chucka" on page 48 to page 27, where, hoping to find both proper spelling and a definition, one finds nothing. Doyle's definition of a "shooting stick" is an example of the American misunderstanding of things English that Waugh abhorred.[47] His glossing of religious allusions is similarly inadequate, as will appear in some notes to this thesis. *The Brideshead Generation: Evelyn Waugh and His Friends* (1990), by the literally unqualified Humphrey Carpenter is a somewhat salacious piece of work including much unsubstantiated sexual gossip, with misleadingly allusive notes only to the modest number of direct quotations.[48] A sentence from the preface to the more appropriately documented and presented *Evelyn Waugh and the Problem of Evil* (1991) by William Myers seems promising, especially in the context of this thesis. "It is not just as a Catholic moralist, but as a Catholic visionary that Waugh should be judged."[49] However, Myers takes his secular definition of evil from the palaeographer/pornographer Georges Bataille, and with his own pen condemns his own work: "If Waugh had glanced at Bataille's *Literature and Evil* [1973 translation of *La littérature et le*

mal, 1953] he would dismiss it as bosh. Had he read it he would have denounced it as wicked bosh."[50]

In summary, few of Waugh's critics deal carefully with his religious and theological preoccupations. Heath is the principal exception, and some of his shortcomings have been noted. Yet with certainty it can be said that both religion and theology preoccupied Waugh and filled his novels. In May, 1944, a month before *Brideshead Revisited* was finished, Evelyn Waugh wrote to his agent A.D. Peters that, "The whole thing is steeped in theology but I begin to agree that theologians wont [sic] recognise it" (L, 185). In 1950, in the Preface to *Helena*, Waugh included an intriguing penultimate paragraph: "There are some [religious, theological and historical] echoes and reflections scattered about the following pages, but it would be tedious to point them out. They are there to be found by anyone whom they would amuse" (H, 11).

The explications that follow will show that Catholic content and frame of reference exist in all Waugh's novels, though to a lesser degree in *Scoop* and the unfinished *Work Suspended*. There is, however, nothing insidious in this theologico-historical game, though Heath suggests otherwise. "By means of charged language Waugh manipulates his readers' response through a form of 'subliminal seduction.' It is a method which has not gone unnoticed. Peter Green observes that Waugh 'would appeal to what we would call the Hidden Persuaders'" (He, 59). Surely all novelists tend not so much to manipulate the responses of their readers as to evoke them, and the choice of language is their means. Dickens, for example, does this very openly, Graham Greene more discreetly. Waugh is subtle rather than manipulative, and has already, in any case, scotched Heath's notion. In a letter to the editor

of *The Spectator* in October, 1961, objecting strenuously, but with grace of language, to John Mortimer's review of Angus Wilson's *Old Men at the Zoo*, he wrote:

> Mr. Mortimer opens his review by deploring the tendency to regard writers as authorities on questions of morals, politics and philosophy.... But Mr. Mortimer's condemnation is wider. 'Many writers,' he says, 'are not very good at anything except writing and the value of their work is often not to be judged by the quality of their thoughts.' But writing is the expression of thought. There is no abstract writing. All literature implies moral standards and criticisms - the less explicit the better. (L, 574)

Waugh was deeply interested in and committed to the Catholic Church; his "religion was the centre of [his] life" according to Christopher Sykes (S, 595). Although Waugh was not a professional theologian, evidence suggests much of his life was as "steeped in theology" as was *Brideshead Revisited*. He used his knowledge and convictions extensively in all his work. He published many articles and reviews on theological and religious topics, some of which appeared in Catholic periodicals, notably *The Tablet* and the *Catholic Herald*. It is also obvious from his letters, diaries and his autobiography that his religion was an integral part of his life from an early age, though his preoccupation was initially Anglo-Catholic with strong Roman Catholic influences.

Besides his novels and short articles and reviews Waugh produced a number of overtly Catholic non-fiction pieces. His *Open Letter to His Eminence the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster* (L, 72-78), written in May, 1933 to protest Ernest Oldmeadow's review of *Black Mischief*, had been preceded by a letter more briefly making similar points published in *The Tablet* on January 21. Father Martin D'Arcy, S.J., Father Bede Jarrett, Father Cyril Martindale, S.J., Eric Gill and several other informed co-religionists signed the letter (S, 178). On a larger scale, Waugh published a biography, *Edmund Campion: Jesuit and Martyr* in 1935, *The Holy Places* (1952), and *The Life of the Right Reverend Ronald*

Knox (1957). In addition to his writing, Waugh's personal relationships often had a Catholic aspect. A number of his friends were Jesuits and many others were practising Catholics, and his letters and diaries reveal that religion and theology played a considerable part in their conversations.

Waugh's reading too had a strongly religious tone, and his library, housed at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, contains an extensive collection of religious and theological texts dealing with a variety of persuasions, as the following short and random list shows: *God's Own Image: A Counter-Revolution in Philosophy* by Ann Sallis Eley; Etienne Gilson's *The Christian Philosophy of Saint Augustine*; Martin D'Arcy's *The Nature of Belief*; Ronald Knox's *Enthusiasm, a Chapter in the History of Religion*, dedicated to Waugh; *Catholicism and Hinduism* by Crescêncio Francisco Bragança Monteiro; Matthew Arnold's *God and the Bible*; Donald Attwater's *Dictionary of Saints*; T.S. Eliot's *Thoughts After Lambeth*; and *The Book of Mormon*.[51] Unable to examine Waugh's library itself, I used the expedient of measuring or counting the cards in the shelf-list of the partially completed catalogue. His collection of religion and philosophy, based on this slightly haphazard and necessarily incomplete method, still appears to be third in importance, out-ranked only by history and, probably, literature.

Examining the catalogue was a small task. The very great majority of the time at the Research Center was spent in examining the two manuscript versions of *Brideshead Revisited*, an undated typescript and two printed versions of the novel, the Research Center's 1952 (?) Chapman and Hall printing, and my own Penguin edition, reprinted in 1981 (see below, pp. 95-96). Even attentive reading of Davis's account of the manuscripts (Da, 119-22) could not prepare me for the enormous size and pleasure of this task. Several different versions,

manuscript and print, of *Unconditional Surrender*, *The End of the Battle* and *Sword of Honour* were also examined. Close readings of Waugh's novels, in a context provided by his non-fiction, his biographers, received critical opinion, and documents relating to such significant events as the Second Vatican Council, form the basis for this thesis. In order to rise to Waugh's occasions it was also necessary to consult a wide variety of "external" sources--dictionaries and handbooks in several subject areas, missals, canon law, for example, as the notes will reveal more fully.

It is hoped that by now it is very clear that Waugh's Catholicism was an integral, inextricable part of his life for by far the longer part of it. What follows is an attempt to show that his Catholic faith was equally intrinsic to all his novels to a greater or lesser degree. This task was been undertaken in the spirit called for by W.H. Auden, who was more than once parodied by Waugh.

> If good literary critics are rarer than good poets or novelists, one reason is the nature of egoism. A poet or a novelist has to learn to be humble in the face of his subject matter which is life in general. But the subject matter of a critic, before which he has to learn to be humble, is made up of authors, that is to say, of human individuals, and this kind of humility is much more difficult to acquire. It is far easier to say - "Life is more important than anything I can say about it" - than to say - "Mr. A's work is more important than anything I can say about it."[52]

CHAPTER II

Waugh's Early Novels: From catholic to Catholic

"Evelyn Waugh, Catholic novelist" is the subtitle and the substance of this thesis. Hence, the principal concern of this chapter must be to show the presence of Catholic ideas and allusions in Waugh's first six novels, and the fragment, *Work Suspended*, written and published immediately before *Brideshead Revisited*. The demonstration will confirm the inaccuracy of the widely shared view that Waugh became a Catholic novelist only with the production of *Brideshead Revisited*. This critical stance is exemplified by Ian Littlewood, writing in 1983:

> It is only Waugh's later heroes and heroines who turn to religion. There is no divinity to watch over the careers of Basil Seal or William Boot; the generation which goes to war in *Put Out More Flags* is godless. Not until *Brideshead Revisited* does Waugh begin, as he put it in 'Fan-Fare', 'to represent man more fully, which, to me, means only one thing, man in his relation to God'. The point is acknowledged in his diary entry for 21 May 1944: 'I think perhaps it is the first of my novels rather than my last.' This leaves no room for claims that the focus of his work has been religious from the start. The implication is clear: only now is his fiction beginning to turn towards God. (Li, 139)

Littlewood supports his case by quoting from Waugh's diary and then inferring that Waugh means that *Brideshead Revisited* is his first Catholic novel. One can equally well look back to a diary entry made exactly two months earlier, and see a different case to make. On March 21, 1944 Waugh wrote, "English writers, at forty, either set about prophesying or acquiring a style. Thank God I think I am beginning to acquire a style" (D, 560).

It seems entirely reasonable and possible to see Waugh's idea that *Brideshead Revisited* was a first novel *in stylistic terms*. This makes particular sense if one remembers that a previous experiment with a new style, *Work Suspended* (1942), had come, if not to

nothing, to only two chapters. *Work Suspended* was also Waugh's first attempt at a first-person narrative, with the exception of the epistolary short story, "Cruise" (1932/33).[1] With *Brideshead Revisited* a style that is less overtly satiric, and which has the voice of a first-person narrator, was a success.

That *Brideshead Revisited* is a Catholic novel is not in dispute. What needs to be done here is to examine the texts of Waugh's early novels carefully to show that Littlewood and those who share his opinion are incorrect in the assumption that none was Catholic. In this way, their inherent Catholicism will appear and Waugh will be seen to be a Catholic novelist from the moment of the writing and publishing of *Decline and Fall*, and a Catholic in spirit before that.

Talking to John Freeman in 1960, Waugh said of himself: "...I think I'd always - that is to say from the age of 16 or so - realised that Catholicism was Christianity" (He, 31).[2] This means that the Waugh who wrote *Decline and Fall* already had a clear sense of Catholicism, and that it was matter for intellectual consideration long before he formally entered the Roman Catholic Church. Waugh's statement also establishes how soon he began to view Catholicism as the only valid form of Christianity, at least as far as he was concerned. His autobiography, *A Little Learning* (1964), suggests strongly that there were "intimations" of Roman Catholicism in the fervent Anglo-Catholicism of his early years:

> God speaks in many voices and manifests himself in countless shapes. Was I living in a world of my own imagination or was I in some faint contact with an objective reality? It would be ungracious and ungrateful to dismiss as pure fancy these intimations of truths which I was more soberly, but still most imperfectly, to grasp in later years. (LL, 94)

Waugh was approximately eleven at this period, as he was when he was taught by an extremely 'high' Anglo-Catholic to serve at the altar:

> At Midsomer Norton I made friends with a curate...who died a Catholic. As a young man he was a ritualist whom even my Aunt Connie thought somewhat extreme, but he had the basic principles of the High churchmen of the times and a sincere piety. He taught me to serve at the altar. I found deep enjoyment in doing so and there can have been little love of personal ostentation, I think, because the one part of the service which I disliked was the 'confession' which I was required to pronounce in a loud voice leading the sparse congregation. This always embarrassed me. But I rejoiced in my nearness to the sacred symbols and in the bright early-morning stillness and in a sense of intimacy with what was being enacted. (LL, 92-93)

As he describes them here, Waugh's thoughts and feelings during the service have much in common with his later sense of involvement in the Roman Catholic Mass.

It is not only Waugh himself who speaks and writes of the early origins and the ineluctable nature of his Catholicism. According to his elder brother Alec:

> ...Evelyn was devout from the beginning. As a child he went to matins, in a small village-type church-room, where the service was conducted by a man not in holy orders, but from the age of, I should say seven, he attended, with the rest of us, choral celebration at St. Jude's, in the Garden Suburb, which was near Anglo-Catholic; its priest being Basil Bouchier [sic], a cousin of the actor, who was satirized as the Rev. Boom Bagshaw in A.S.M. Hutchinson's 1921 best-selier *If Winter Comes*. Evelyn was confirmed there in 1916. He had a shrine in his bedroom, at which he lit incense. In *A Little Learning* he tells that in his later years at Lancing he had a period of agnosticism, but I do not believe that it lasted long. In *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*, he speaks of his conversion as the inevitable crossing of a line, *a step that could have been foreseen from the beginning*. [My emphasis][3]

The agnosticism Alec speaks of was, according to Evelyn, atheism, and began in his sixteenth year. In a sense, the choice of term is unimportant, for Waugh himself says that this particular experience was, anyway, an imposition from the outside, something that was almost expected by his masters, rather than a deeply felt personal decision. "We were encouraged to 'think for ourselves' and our thoughts in most cases turned into negations. There was no question of secretly conning illicit, subversive books. They were pressed upon us. I can think of three occasions when I was hedged into infidelity by those set over me" (LL, 142).

One of the occasions was when a fiery preacher, the prototype of the "brilliant Arcturus" of Ronald Knox's *Absolute and Abitofhell* (LL, 143), came to debate at Lancing. He chose to be a devil's advocate and proceeded to question the divinity of Christ. On another occasion Waugh's House-tutor read from the atheist Arnold Lunn's text, *Loose Ends*. Lunn's atheism, like Waugh's, was transitory--he died a Catholic (LL, 143).

Martin Stannard, without alluding to Waugh's early religious experiences, still considers that all Waugh's novels are founded on Catholicism. Stannard begins this assertion by quoting from a letter Waugh wrote to his fiancée, Laura Herbert, in 1936.

> [Writers] "try to represent the whole human mind and soul and yet omit its determining character - that of being God's creature with a defined purpose." His earlier [pre-1939] writings, working within a humanist framework described behaviour and asserted Catholic values by negative suggestion. But they seemed 'light' because they omitted 'the determining character' of the 'soul' (He had described *Scoop* to his agents as 'light and excellent'.)[4]

So, the author of *Decline and Fall*, though practising no religion, is still the product of a faith-filled youth; he already believes that Catholicism *is* Christianity. And he is about to produce a novel as permeated by a catholicity of religious references as the speech of one of his many extraordinary inventions, the demented carpenter, is soaked in blood and pseudo-Biblical quotation.

Decline and Fall is, for some critics, an anomaly among all Waugh's novels, in that it is for them clearly a product of the "atheist" period. Ian Littlewood, for example, devotes an entire lengthy chapter to religion in his study of Waugh's work, and in it mentions *Decline and Fall* not at all (Li, 139-80). Even Jeffrey Heath, who sees "Waugh's novels [as] satires rooted in a Christian and ultimately a Roman Catholic vision of history in which the contemporary world is a hollow caricature of an unseen realm and a black parody of the more

substantial past," undercuts his overall argument by claiming only that Waugh "was a moralist at least as early as *Decline and Fall*" (He, xiii). He goes on undermining the importance of religious references in *Decline and Fall* by suggesting that these are supposed to reach the reader subliminally (an idea that would surely be abhorrent to Waugh, honest to a fault), and that, "thanks to Waugh's cheeky sleight of hand, they are seldom noticed" (He, 77). It would take a slovenly reader, skipping lightly, to miss many of Waugh's myriad allusions, quotations, artefacts and characters major and minor drawn from the vast possibilities offered by Christendom.

Rather, *Decline and Fall*, vastly amusing though it is, is a fictional statement of the choice Waugh was to make more obviously at his conversion, the choice "between Christianity and Chaos" (E, 103). Waugh in *Decline and Fall* shows that he has already chosen Christianity, a choice symbolised by Paul Pennyfeather's restored vocation as an Anglican clergyman. But for Waugh, as he explains in "Converted to Rome" (1930), this means a personal choice for Catholicism:

> ...the first discovery [is] that Christianity is essential to civilization and that it is in greater need of combative strength than it has been for centuries. The second discovery is that Christianity exists in its most complete and vital form in the Roman Catholic Church.... For instance it seems to me a necessary sign of completeness and vitality in a religious body that its teaching shall be coherent and consistent. If its own mind is not made up, it can hardly hope to withstand disorder from outside. In the Anglican Church today matters of supreme importance in faith and morals are still discussed indecisively, while the holders of high offices are able to make public assertions which do violence to the deepest feelings of many of their people. (E, 104)

Not only does this passage point back to *Decline and Fall*, which is rife with Protestant indecisiveness, most clearly symbolised by Prendergast's waverings and Doubts, it has noteworthy prescience. What Waugh wrote of the Anglican Church in the late 1920's and

early 1930's was to become true of the Roman Catholic Church with the reign of Pius XII, and reach its apogee (or nadir) with the pronouncements of Vatican II, which were to cause so much "violence" to Waugh's "deepest feelings."

Gene D. Phillips agrees that the ideals Waugh proclaimed at and after his conversion are implicit in *Decline and Fall*. "Though Waugh had shed his religious upbringing while at school, he was apparently beginning to believe on this eve of his conversion what he would often say explicitly thereafter; since modern civilization came into being through Christianity, it would not survive once its supernatural basis was removed" (P, 10-11). Although Phillips' supporting opinion is valuable, one could wish that he had written that it was Waugh's belief rather than his "religious upbringing" that he shed. The upbringing never left him. However, Phillips argues:

> An unmistakeably religious air hovers about the social satire in *Decline and Fall*. But religion itself is not really being ridiculed at all - only religion in the bogus forms with which Paul comes into contact. Thus as the book ends, Paul has at last returned to divinity school to prepare for the priesthood and has retreated to a rigidly orthodox religious position - as far from Prendergast the Modern Churchman in one direction as from the "lion of the Lord's elect" in the other. (P, 13)

Decline and Fall, then, though written before Waugh's conversion to Roman Catholicism is, nevertheless, replete with religious and theological ideas. Although largely comic, with a reasonably cheerful ending, *Decline and Fall* does not seem to be the work of a novelist determined to be gratuitously cruel or thoughtlessly blasphemous. Nor is he in any way careless of the smallest details of the background and "decoration," nor of the minor characteristics of major figures, and the important contribution made to the whole by minor characters. Indeed, as one reads more closely, everything, including the theological

possibilities so clearly described by Waugh, (see above pp. 14-15) and the less obvious references that begin to reveal themselves, becomes *necessary*.

Paul Pennyfeather, a divinity student, the middle-class "hero" of *Decline and Fall*, is unfairly sent down from Scone College, Oxford, because he becomes innocently embroiled in the destructive rites of the very upper-class Bollinger Society. Degreeless, he is denied any occupation but teaching at a school of doubtful scholarship and virtue, Llanabba Castle. There, through the machinations of his pupil, Peter Beste-Chetwynde, he meets Peter's glamorous mother, Margot, a white slaver. She lures him away from the school and the company of his fellow teachers--Grimes, the perpetual would-be suicide, and Prendergast, an ex-clergyman with Doubts. Paul is installed in the fashionable and louche world of London Society. Margot and Paul are to marry, but on the morning of the wedding he is arrested for his work on behalf of Margot's business. He is gaoled, and whilst a prisoner, remeets Prendergast, now a prison chaplain. Both escape prison, Prendergast by being murdered by the religious fanatic carpenter, and Paul by being rescued by Margot's minions. After spending a little time in her company, safe on the island of Corfu, Paul returns to Scone, pretending to be his own cousin. The story comes full circle as he is about to complete his degree and become a churchman himself. So, underlying and infiltrating the whole novel is Paul's vocation, a very orthodox one. Toying with heresy and reading papers to the Thomas More Society no longer interest him.

Paul's priestly vocation, though postponed, is not denied either to him or by him. His experiences in the unattractively and attractively wicked world, as near-pauper and as one who leads the rich life, may be seen either as temptations like those of St. Anthony, to which he briefly succumbs, or a taste of a sensuous and sensual world filled with dancing, dining

and champagne, so that he will, eventually, give them up willingly and knowledgeably. That he was not yet rigid in his Protestant vocation is attested to by the fact that "he had read a rather daring paper to the Thomas More Society" (DF, 12), and possessed Stanley's *Eastern Church*. His prison life has an almost monastic purity and tranquillity:

> Paul's mug was filled with cocoa, and the door was again locked. The tin contained bread, bacon, and beans. That was the last interruption for fourteen hours. Paul fell into a reverie. It was the first time he had been really alone for months. How very refreshing it was. he reflected. The next four weeks of solitary confinement were among the happiest of Paul's life. The physical comforts were certainly meagre, but at the Ritz Paul had learned to appreciate the inadequacy of purely physical comfort.... Paul...spent the evenings in meditation and in writing up on his slate the thoughts which had occurred to him during the day. (DF, 169-71)

Paul, even as a gaolbird, is more fortunate than his former colleague, Prendergast with his Doubts, who is both hilarious and a man in spiritual pain. "I couldn't understand why God had made the world at all.... Once granted the first step, I can see that everything else follows - Tower of Babel, Babylonian captivity, Incarnation, Church, bishops, incense, everything - but what I couldn't see, and what I can't see now, is *why* did it all begin" (DF, 33). But Prendergast cannot simply give up and become a peaceful doubter or a placid atheist (impossibilities anyway for the older Waugh and possibly the Waugh of *Decline and Fall*). Instead he must continue to consider obsessively, and to wrestle with, his devil, Doubt. "'He was talking very excitedly to me,' said the Vicar, 'about some apparatus for warming a Church in Worthing and about the Apostolic claims of the Church of Abyssinia.... He seems deeply interested in Church matters'" (DF, 72). Prendergast cannot let go either of the practicalities or of the intellectual concerns of the lost vocation. Or could it be that the vocation will not release him? (The question of missed vocation is much more lengthily and seriously taken up in *Brideshead Revisited*, but is undoubtedly adumbrated here).

Ian Littlewood has argued that Waugh's treatment of Prendergast obviates religion:

> Prendy's Doubts were nothing run of the mill about Cain's wife or the Old Testament miracles. 'No, it was something deeper than all that. *I couldn't understand why God had made the world at all.*' An echo of the author's own perception of this is unmistakeable - and we have his suicide attempt a couple of years earlier to confirm it - but any sympathy with this character's dilemma is extinguished by Waugh's irony. Prendy's abandonment of the vicarage at Worthing is a sacrifice that cannot easily be invested with grandeur. To see this part of the book as a humorous way of broaching serious issues would be quite mistaken; rather it is a humorous way of exorcizing them. The irony is not designed to introduce seriousness but to keep it out. And with it religion. (Li, 146)

This may be true for Littlewood, but, although irony and satire do, certainly, permeate *Decline and Fall*, it does not seem to be invariably the case that Waugh uses them to exorcise the seriousness of Prendergast's Doubts or to keep out religion. Rather, the reader, or at least this one, is obliged by Waugh's presentation of Prendergast's dilemma and Doubts, to feel human sympathy for a character experiencing human feelings and sufferings. The fact that his decision to leave the vicarage at Worthing lacks, for Littlewood, "grandeur" in no way diminishes its reality, nor the religious honesty of Prendergast's response to the devastating seriousness of his religious decision. The human and religious truth of Prendergast's circumstances are not exorcised by Waugh's satire. Rather, for a brief moment, religious satire is suspended, giving greater depth to Prendergast's character, and strengthening the rest of the satire. For Waugh writes of Prendergast and his dilemma almost tenderly, as he will do later when dealing with Sir Samson Courteney's problems in *Black Mischief*.

As a Modern Churchman, and chaplain of Blackstone Gaol, Prendergast becomes, in a horrific and humorous fashion, a Modern Martyr. This is his release, the end of his Doubts, and his apotheosis. Decapitated slowly and painfully (pain is an apparent *sine qua*

non of a martyr's death), by the visionary maniac carpenter, Prendergast's death is announced to the prison community in chapel through the brilliantly modified, but still partially intact, verses of "O God our help in ages past." His bizarrely rediscovered vocation, the motives of his killer, and the manner and place of his death announcement are surely, though twisted, hideous and comic, holy, holy, holy. And Prendergast's martyrdom produces benefits for his survivors, another important element of the essentially Catholic process of martyrdom: the experiments beloved by Sir Wilfred Lucas-Dockery are abandoned, to the enormous relief of Blackstone's inmates and guards.

The flowing, blood-drenched prose in which the crazy carpenter describes his visions and condemns his captors and tormentors, though wonderfully parodic, evinces, as does all successful parody, a thorough grasp of what is being parodied. The language of the Old Testament, of tub-thumping Low Church evangelists, and of mystically inspired preachers is smoothly, readily and convincingly available to Waugh. Particularly interesting and appropriate in the context of this thesis is the madman's phrase, as he rants to Paul, "The mirth is turned into weeping" (DF, 178). The sentence is Waugh's pastiche, not biblical.[5] One cannot question Waugh's knowledge of the biblical, theological and oratorical styles he so brilliantly perverts here. Yet Malcolm Bradbury was able to write a fairly substantial piece on *Decline and Fall* in 1964 without once mentioning church, religion, or God.[6] These terms and ideas are clearly at least part of the foundation upon which the whole text rests.

Less certainly, but not unreasonably, Grimes's "suicides" and resurrections seem to hint strongly and more obviously at Catholic concern. Grimes will not be allowed to commit suicide, one of the most terrible of mortal sins, even for laughs, any more than Waugh himself was. Grimes's frequent recalls to life make Lazarus seem a rather modest performer.

Once one discovers the very obvious and frequent allusions to religion, to various Christian denominations and to theological debates, more and more religiously connected elements in the text offer themselves for examination. For example, Grimes's attempt to convince Paul that he is in love with Margot Beste-Chetwynde takes on aspects that may be seen either as antiphonal or catechetical.

> 'Old boy,' said Grimes, 'you're in love.'
> 'Nonsense!'
> 'Smitten?' said Grimes.
> 'No, no.'
> 'The tender passion?'
> 'No.'
> 'Cupid's jolly little darts?'
> 'No.'
> "Spring fancies, love's young dream?'
> 'Nonsense!'
> 'Not even a quickening of the pulse?'
> 'No.'
> 'A sweet despair?'
> 'Certainly not."
> 'A trembling hope?'
> 'No.'
> 'A *frisson?* a *Je ne sais quoi?*'
> 'Nothing of the sort.'
> 'Liar!' said Grimes.
> There was another long pause. 'Grimes,' said Paul at length, 'I wonder if you can be right?' (DF, 88)

Waugh may have been tone-deaf, but he had a good ear for responsory rhythm.

Although there may be no deep significance to Waugh's choice of carpentry for his mad murderer's occupation, no one reading Waugh and attempting to keep in mind his preoccupations and frame of reference can ignore the fact that this trade was also followed by Jesus and his surrogate father. The carpenter could easily have been given access to sharp and deadly tools in other professional circumstances--cutler, butcher, stone-mason (especially

if he specialised in headstones!). But all these lack the holy resonance that the carpentry trade has acquired.

In *Decline and Fall*, scattered through the text, references to the substance and trappings of doctrinal and practical Christianity abound. These are only samples: there are Ebionites (DF, 216); stained glass windows depicting SS. Peter and Paul (DF, 185-86); Dean Stanley's *Eastern Church* (DF, 14); Philbrick claims to be a Roman Catholic (DF, 90); as prison reading matter there is *Prayers on Various Occasions of Illness, Uncertainty and Loss*, by the Reverend Septimus Bead, M.A., Edinburgh, 1863 (DF, 168);[7] the undergraduate Stiggins reads a paper on "Sex Repression and the Religious Experience" to the O.S.C.U. (DF, 45); Chokey, Margot Beste-Chetwynde's glamorous black paramour, "Thinks religion is just divine" (DF, 82), and there is "a bishop of Bithynia,..who had denied the Divinity of Christ, the immortality of the soul, the existence of good, the legality of marriage, and the validity of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction" (DF, 212). To this last, there is the comment, both Paul's implicitly and the narrator's, "How right they were to condemn him!" (DF, 212). This seems to be a Wavian joke,[8] and the subjects of the bishop's heresy very much topics Waugh may already have begun to consider seriously. Several section titles add weight to the religious themes: "Vocation," "Discipline," "The Agony of Captain Grimes," "Resurrection," "The Death of a Modern Churchman" and, yet again, "Resurrection." Throughout, there is Paul's apparently true vocation. All these are undeniably Christian elements, and already for Waugh, as he told John Freeman, the term Christian meant Catholic.

It is vitally important, before going on to examine *Vile Bodies*, Waugh's next novel, to look further at the deep roots of Waugh's Catholicism and at the person who grew from

those roots. One must understand some of the nature of the author of *Vile Bodies* in order to understand the novel for what it is--a significantly Catholic statement. Evelyn Waugh "was received into the Roman Catholic Church at Farm Street on 29 September 1930" (EWHW, 74), eight months after *Vile Bodies* was first published.[9] It was written largely in July and August, 1929 (D, 36-37). In July, 1930 he had already begun to visit Father Martin D'Arcy to receive instruction (D, 32). It seems natural to assume that his conversion, or at least his consideration of the nature of Catholicism, had been the subject of a good deal of cogitation considerably earlier. As Waugh said to John Freeman: "I was under instruction - literally under instruction - for about three months, but of course I'd interested myself in it before, reading books independently and so on" (He, 33). Just how long ago was "before"?

Father D'Arcy relates Waugh's road to conversion specifically to his early novels: "The steps which brought him to his embracing the Catholic faith are visible in the themes of his novels. The character of the innocent man--or half-innocent because he has no positive virtues--thrown to the wolves appears in Paul Pennyfeather of *Decline and Fall*, Adam Symes in *Vile Bodies* and Tony Last in *A Handful of Dust*" (EWHW, 62). Waugh's longtime friend and co-religionist Douglas Woodruff explains how the Catholic Church held particular promise for Waugh:

> He had been educated at a High Anglican school, but in his revulsion against the moral laxity and crumbling standards of the Twenties, he did not feel any attraction towards the Church of his upbringing, because of the lack of steel in its structure; part of what appealed to him in Rome was that the Roman Church was a religion of authority. (EWHW, 104)

"His revulsion" and the doctrines and teachings of the Catholic Church had undoubtedly become an intrinsic part of his intellectual processes whilst *Vile Bodies* was taking shape. It

is as though his road to Catholicism had become the firm ground which allowed him to give free rein to his satire. He had discovered the truth and it had made him free.

The title, *Vile Bodies*, comes from Philippians, iii.21: "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself."[10] The characters in *Vile Bodies* are variously but unquestionably vile. It is possible that Waugh may have come to believe that his incipient conversion was to remove him from the vile, to "be fashioned like unto his glorious body...." This is not vainglorious. Waugh may now simply stand aside, supported by his new convictions, and see his situation reflected in Philippians, iii.20: "For our conversation is in heaven: from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." Verses 18 and 19 of the same chapter admirably describe Waugh's vile bodies: "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory *is* in their shame, who mind earthly things." These verses also describe a world to which Waugh himself belonged, from his later school days until whatever moment his need for conversion became real. As Waugh wrote later, in 1949, in "Come Inside": "Ten years of that world sufficed to show me that life there, or anywhere, was unintelligible and unendurable without God" (E, 367).

Vile Bodies is about an "unintelligible and unendurable" godless world. But it is written by a man who is coming to know God and who sees the world of *Vile Bodies* as a waste land. He still makes his readers laugh, but *Vile Bodies* is a novel almost without compassion, unlike *Decline and Fall*. Although *Decline and Fall* is by no means free of religious satire, it lacks the bite of that in *Vile Bodies*. Paul Pennyfeather, the would-be

priest, is a gullible fool, not a rogue. Poor Prendergast is mentally tortured by his Doubts and evokes at least a little pity in the heart of the reader. Even the blood-obsessed carpenter honestly believes in his manic Christian mission. None of these three could be classified as "vile bodies." Each is honest, if odd, in his beliefs, and both honesty and belief are conspicuous by their absence from *Vile Bodies*. Certainly none of these three from *Decline and Fall* has a god who "is their belly." Prendergast is as delighted as a child when offered by Paul a very ordinary but for him almost fabulous meal. Paul is genuinely content with prison fare, even though Margot sends him luxurious food. And the insane carpenter has no appetite for anything but scriptural blood and very real death.

Vile Bodies is a tale of Bright Young, and not-so-young, People, and their riotous and irresponsible way of living and enjoying themselves. Agatha Runcible, the Brightest and dimmest, helps eat her unknowing host, the Prime Minister, out of house and home at a post-mayhem dawn breakfast. She steals a racing car, enters a race, crashes and dies raving in a "darkened room" (VB, 186) in a nursing home, having come to "nothing at all...nothing" (VB, 200). Poverty-stricken young men and the not-so-young Miles Malpractice compete for a job as a gossip columnist. In the midst of this, at the cold heart of *Vile Bodies*, is the failed romance of Nina Blount and Adam Fenwick-Symes.

Dishonesty, subterfuge and fraudulence litter *Vile Bodies*, especially as far as the Christian religion is concerned. Waugh cuts a wide swathe from Catholicism to holy-rollerism via non-conformity. Father Rothschild is a thoroughly modern version of the traditionally devious and suspicious Jesuit of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century historical novels. His name immediately calls to mind worldly wealth and material *savoir faire*. At the opposite end of the "Christian" spectrum is the controlledly hysterical Mrs. Melrose Ape,

with her troupe of sinful or invincibly ignorant angels. In between is a grotesquely ill-informed "cinema film" purporting to relate the life of John Wesley. With all three approaches to religion Waugh makes satiric hay.

In Father Rothschild's case there are heavy hints of totally inappropriate practical and politically strategic knowledge:

> In the study Father Rothschild and Mr. Outrage were plotting with enthusiasm. Lord Metroland was smoking a cigar and wondering how soon he could get away....
>
> Suddenly Father Rothschild turned out the light.
>
> 'There's someone coming down the passage,' he said. 'Quick get behind the curtains.'
>
> 'Really, Rothschild...' said Mr. Outrage.
>
> 'I say...' said Lord Metroland.
>
> '*Quick*,' said Father Rothschild.
>
> The three statesmen hid themselves. Lord Metroland, still smoking, his head thrown back and his cigar erect. They heard the door open. The light was turned on. A match was struck. Then came the slight tinkle of the telephone as someone lifted the receiver.
>
> 'Central ten thousand,' said a slightly muffled voice.
>
> '*Now*,' said Father Rothschild, and stepped through the curtain.
> (VB, 101-02)

Jesuit priest Father Rothschild, a man who may live in, but who should not be of, this world, most especially not the world of *Vile Bodies*, has just, through his political astuteness and social awareness, saved two elder statesmen, far more "innocent" than the knowing Father, from the untender mercies of *Mr. Chatterbox*. It is difficult to say whence came this stereotypical portrait of a wily, conniving Jesuit. Unlike Graham Greene, Waugh seems not to have enjoyed, indeed not even to have read, the sometimes lurid historical romances of Henty, Stanley Weyman, Dumas *père* and Captain Marryat (LL, 71, 107; D, 5, 32, 89), where he might have discovered such a priest. Equally, as far as it is possible to tell, Waugh knew no real Jesuits and had no axe to grind. And of course, Jesuits were soon to become his instructors, his confessors and his friends. So the origins of Father Rothschild are as

mysterious as the character himself. According to Martin Stannard, "Waugh looked back with shame on his characterisation of Rothschild."[11]

Mrs. Ape uses her brand of religion to make money and enjoy the power that accompanies it. She has a masterful speaking technique that would do an advertising agency credit:

> Then Mrs. Melrose Ape stood up to speak. A hush fell over the ballroom beginning at the back and spreading among the gilt chairs until only Mrs. Blackwater's voice was heard exquisitely articulating some details of Lady Metroland's past. Then she, too, was silent and Mrs. Ape began her oration about Hope.
>
> 'Brothers and Sisters,' she said in a hoarse, stirring voice. Then she paused and allowed her eyes, renowned throughout the three continents for their magnetism, to travel among the gilded chairs. (It was one of her favourite openings.) '*Just you look at yourselves*,' she said.
>
> Magically self-doubt began to spread in the audience....
>
> 'She's got 'em again,' whispered Creative Endeavour. 'Got 'em stiff.' (VB, 100-01)

The absolute dishonesty of Mrs. Melrose Ape's performances is dragged even further into the depths of hilarious satire when the desperate Simon Balcairn, gossip columnist, banned from attending a party at which Mrs. Ape will perform, improvises brilliantly:

> At his glass-topped table, sipping his cocktail, Simon Balcairn dictated his last story.
>
> *'Scenes of wild religious enthusiasm, comma, reminiscent of a negro camp-meeting in Southern America, comma, broke out in the heart of Mayfair yesterday evening at the party given for the famous American Revivalist Mrs. Ape by the Vicountess Metroland, formerly the Hon. Mrs. Beste-Chetwynde, at her historic mansion, Pastmaster House, stop. The magnificent ballroom can never have enshrined a more brilliant assembly ...'*
>
> It was his swan-song. Lie after monstrous lie bubbled up in his brain.
>
> *'...The Hon. Agatha Runcible joined Mrs. Ape among the orchids and led the singing, tears coursing down her face...'*
>
> *'...barely had Lady Everyman finished before the Countess of Throbbing rose to confess her sins, and in a voice broken with emotion disclosed the hitherto unverified details of the parentage of the present Earl....'*

> *'...The Marquess of Vanburgh, shaken by sobs of contrition. ...Mrs. Panrast, singing feverishly. ...Lady Anchorage with downcast eyes...'* (VB, 104-05)

He magnificently out-performs Mrs. Ape, whose usual methods bear a close resemblance to the practice of selling indulgences: "...Mrs. Ape, as was her invariable rule, took around the hat and collected nearly two pounds, not counting her own five shillings which she got back from the bar steward. 'Salvation doesn't do them the same good if they think it's free,' was her favourite axiom" (VB, 22).

The filmed "Life of John Wesley" is a travesty from start to finish, to make as much money as possible, and to hell with the truth. Adam Symes walks into the film set looking for Colonel Blount and comes upon an actor who discusses the production techniques of the film:

> [Adam] had not gone very far in his detour before he was again stopped, this time by a man dressed in a surplice, episcopal lawn sleeves and scarlet hood and gown; he was smoking a cigar.
>
> 'Here, what in hell do *you* want?' said the Bishop.
>
> 'I came to see Colonel Blount.'
>
> 'Well, you can't, son. They're just shooting him now.'
>
> 'Good heavens, what for?'
>
> 'Oh, nothing important. He's just one of the Wesleyans, you know - we're trying to polish off the whole crowd this afternoon while the weather's good.'
>
> Adam found himself speechless before this cold-blooded bigotry.
>
> 'What d'you want to see the old geezer about, anyway?'
>
> 'Well, it hardly seems any good now. I came to tell him that I'd got a job on the *Excess*.'
>
> 'The devil you have. Why didn't you say so before? Always pleased to see gentlemen of the Press. Have a weed?' A large cigar-case appeared from the recesses of the episcopal bosom. 'I'm Bishop Philpotts, you know,' he said, slipping a voluminously clothed arm through Adam's. 'I dare say you'd like to come round to the front and see the fun. I should think they'd be just singing their last hymn now. It's been uphill work,' he confided as they walked round the side of the house.... (VB, 141)

Wesley becomes increasingly insignificant and the film ever more a perversion of his life. Later, Adam, Nina and the reluctant Rector and his wife are shown the Wesleyan masterpiece:

> 'A BRAND FROM THE BURNING: A FILM BASED ON THE LIFE OF JOHN WESLEY'
> ('*There*,' said the Colonel.)
> 'EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND'
> There came in breathless succession four bewigged men in fancy costume, sitting round a card table. There were glasses, heaps of money and candles on the table. They were clearly gambling feverishly and drinking a lot.... Then a highwayman holding up the coach which Adam had seen; then some beggers starving outside Doubting Church; then some ladies in fancy costume dancing a minuet. (VB, 209-10)

Then there is in the film, a suggestion of hell-fire, anticipating the more drear and purgatorial end of the novel: "A corner of Doubting Hall appeared with clouds of smoke billowing from the windows. A clergyman was seen handing out a succession of children with feverish rapidity of action" (VB, 210). Next, repeating Agatha Runcible's dark end, "There was a sudden crackling sound, a long blue spark, and the light was extinguished" (VB, 211). Again the novel's close is prefigured.

Shortly before the film showing, Colonel Blount has stated in no uncertain terms his views of the appropriate relations between clergy and laity:

> In the library Colonel Blount said, 'I've got a treat for you to-night, anyway. The last two reels of my cinema film have just come back from being developed. I thought we'ld run through it to-night. We shall have to go across to the Rectory, because the Rector's got electric light, the lucky fellow. I told him to expect us. He didn't seem very pleased about it. Said he had to preach three sermons to-morrow, and be up at six for early service. That's not the Christmas spirit. Didn't want to bring the car round to fetch us either. It's only a matter of a quarter of a mile, no trouble to *him*, and how can we walk in the snow carrying all the apparatus? I said to him, "If you practised a little more Christianity yourself we might be more willing to subscribe to your foreign missions and Boy Scouts and organ funds." Had him there. Dammit, I put the man in his job myself - if I haven't a right to his car, who has?' (VB, 205)

Through Colonel Blount, the Church of England, which here offers no faith, no hope and very little charity, becomes the target of Waugh's satire.

If Mrs. Ape and the movie Wesleyans are to be roundly denounced by Waugh's satiric approach, and ultimately unsuccessful, the apparently ubiquitous Father Rothschild is more to be feared. He is frighteningly omnipresent, unnaturally powerful to the point, almost, of omnipotence. And he looks not saintly, but devilish:

> With Asiatic resignation Father Rothschild S.J. put down his suitcase in the corner of the bar and went on deck.... Very few [of the passengers] were unknown to the Jesuit, for it was his happy knack to remember everything that could possibly be of any importance. His tongue protruded very slightly and, had they not all been so concerned with luggage and the weather, someone might have observed in him a peculiar resemblance to those plaster reproductions of the gargoyles of Notre Dame which may be seen in the shop windows of artists' colourmen tinted the colour of 'Old Ivory,' peering intently from among stencil outfits and plasticine and tubes of water-colour paint. (VB, 9)

In spite of his grotesque appearance Father Rothschild does think priestly thoughts. "To Father Rothschild no passage was worse than any other. He thought of the sufferings of the saints, the mutability of human nature, the Four Last Things, and between whiles repeated snatches of the penitential psalms" (VB, 15). But he also knows more about the work of supposedly informed and important politicians and businessmen than they do:

> 'And anyway, what do you mean by "historical"?'
> 'Well, [said Father Rothschild] it's like this war that's coming....'
> '*What war*?' said the Prime Minister sharply (VB, 132-33).

He is not above conspiracy either:

> Father Rothschild was conspiring with Mr. Outrage and Lord Metroland. He stopped short in the middle of his sentence.
> 'Forgive me,' he said, 'but there are spies everywhere. That man with the beard, do you know him?'
> Lord Metroland thought vaguely he had something to do with the Foreign Office; Mr. Outrage seemed to remember having seen him before.

> 'Exactly,' said Father Rothschild. 'I think it would be better if we continued our conversation in private. I have been watching him. *He is bowing across the room to empty places and to people whose backs are turned to him.*' The Great Men withdrew to Lord Metroland's study. Father Rothschild closed the door silently and looked behind the curtains.
>
> 'Shall I lock the door?' asked Lord Metroland.
>
> 'No,' said the Jesuit. 'A lock does not prevent a spy from hearing; but it does hinder us, inside, from catching the spy.'
>
> 'Well, I should never have thought of that,' said Mr. Outrage in frank admiration. (VB, 97-98)

Colonel Blount's place among the "vile bodies" is difficult to pinpoint accurately. At first he seems endearingly eccentric, but more and more frequently exhibits low cunning. Apparently he is willing to help Adam Symes financially, but Adam discovers the cheque has been signed "Charlie Chaplin." "'Well I'm damned,' said Adam again." "'The old devil'" (VB, 83). He is prophetic.

Colonel Blount lives at Doubting Hall (locally pronounced "Doubting 'All"). Paul Doyle suggests that this is "Possibly an allusion to Doubting Castle in John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, the home of the fearful Giant Despair."[12] It is a place that had once been a source of hope, especially financially, for Adam and his fiancée, Nina, and also for the film company. It becomes the place from which despair springs. Money equals happiness in this vile world, poverty means despair. The film fails, and, far more importantly, Colonel Blount's fake signature on Adam's cheque leads to his having to sell Nina, for "seventy-eight pounds sixteen and twopence" (VB, 197), to cover a debt. In this hopeless and despairing world such an act seems almost ordinary. Adam is ruined anyway. Colonel Blount is the ultimate source of that ruin. He is a gleefully malignant destroyer whose home is, in microcosm, the vicious world of the Bright Young People. Their collective activities bring about the cataclysm with which the novel ends. Doubting 'All also suggests the philosophical ideas, insofar as they exist, of Waugh's vile bodies.

Colonel Blount is the most devilish among all the vile bodies. It is his once trivial power that ensures that Adam, and one assumes, most of humanity, will end in a version of hell:

> On a splintered tree stump in the biggest battlefield in the history of the world, Adam sat down and read a letter from Nina. It had arrived early the day before, but in the intensive fighting which followed he had not had a spare minute to open it....
>
> And presently, like a circling typhoon, the sounds of battle began to return. (VB, 220/224)

Perhaps now, because of his conversion, Waugh lives in hope of heaven but surrounded really and fictionally by doubt and despair. Of all Waugh's satires *Vile Bodies* is the only one (though *A Handful of Dust* comes close) that describes utter, though often extremely funny, despair. *Vile Bodies* is unmistakably the converting Catholic's picture of an "unintelligible and unendurable" world whose inhabitants cannot even dream of heaven, let alone achieve it. It is a waste land more barren and hopeless than Eliot's. For Eliot's *Waste Land* ends with the words "Shantih Shantih Shantih"--"a formal ending to an Upanishad. 'The Peace which passeth understanding' is our equivalent to this word."[13] Waugh's novel ends with a version of the deadly ignorance of the early lines of *The Waste Land*:

> What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow
> Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,
> You cannot say, or guess, for you know only
> A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,
> And the dead tree gives no shelter,...[14]

For Waugh there is only "a splintered tree stump."

Some critics, Stannard amongst them, believe that the end of *Vile Bodies*, in its despair, derives from the collapse of Waugh's first marriage to another Evelyn, Evelyn Gardner, known as She-Evelyn. He quotes the epigraph from a typescript of the novel

"BRIGHT YOUNG PEOPLE AND OTHERS KINDLY NOTE THAT ALL CHARACTERS ARE WHOLLY IMAGINARY (AND YOU GET FAR TOO MUCH PUBLICITY ALREADY WHOEVER YOU ARE)"--and explains that this has been replaced in the published version by "two mordant quotations from *Through the Looking Glass*."[15] Waugh himself wrote to Henry Yorke, in September, 1929: "I put off going abroad and came here to make a last effort at finishing my novel. It has been infinitely difficult and is certainly the last time I shall try to make a book about sophisticated people. It all seems to shrivel up and rot internally and I am relying on a sort of cumulative futility for any effect it may have" (L, 39). But Alec Waugh believes that there "is no change of tempo or temper between the later grief-shadowed chapters and [the] earlier ones...."[16] Odd though it may seem, Alec is probably right, and He-Evelyn has misjudged his own work. The gaiety of the beginning of *Vile Bodies* has the frenetic quality that is bound to end in tears before bedtime. Even at this early stage of his career Waugh was too much of a craftsman and too much in control of his work to allow personal circumstances to distort his writerly intentions. And as it appears highly likely that he had contemplated conversion for some time, the collapse of his marriage can scarcely be seen as its cause, as for example, Michael Davie argues (D, 306).

After the unremitting gloom of the end of *Vile Bodies* most readers, though not all critics, found *Black Mischief* exhilarating and unoppressive. It is the account of the often charming but dissolute Basil Seal, who, on the strength of emeralds stolen from his mother, embarks on a voyage to Azania, for the sake of something to do. Azania is in the throes of internal political changes, and is also beset by the work of missionaries of at least five different species. Basil, arriving opportunely, easily climbs up the political ladder whilst helping Seth, Emperor of Azania, carry out his "reforms."

Although Waugh had travelled to Abyssinia, Kenya, Tanganyika and Zanzibar, he made no claim to be an Africanist, but drew on memories of his travels, as he was to do later in *Scoop*. The amazing history of Abyssinia, recorded in *Remote People* (1931), provides the dotty backdrop for *Black Mischief*:

> Further information was contributed from less reliable sources; that the Abyssinian Church had canonized Pontius Pilate, and consecrated their bishops by spitting on their heads; that the real heir to the throne was hidden in the mountains, fettered with chains of solid gold; that the people lived on raw meat and mead; we looked up the royal family in the *Almanack [sic] de Gotha* and traced their descent from Solomon and the Queen of Sheba; we found a history which began: 'The first certain knowledge which we have of Ethiopian history is when Cush the son of --- ascended the throne immediately after the Deluge'; an obsolete encyclopaedia informed us that, 'though nominally Christian, the Abyssinians are deplorably lax in their morals, polygamy and drunkenness being common even among the highest classes and in the monasteries.'[17]

Black Mischief is a fine piece of madness, crammed with large and small incidents of hilarity and calamity. The Azanian army eats its boots; Basil unknowingly eats Prudence, the daughter of the British Minister, during a cannibal feast; a usurping Emperor drops dead under the weight of the crown at his coronation. The novel is absolutely full of fascinating details, none of which could be removed from the text without damage. *Black Mischief* is a relatively short novel, composed mainly of ludicrous but brilliantly recounted incidents. One is given a large series of glimpses of the monotony of colonial life and its alienation from its "natural" surroundings. The whole edges slowly, but inevitably, towards lunacy, partially caused by Basil. He escapes it, though.

Black Mischief is almost certainly Waugh's most controversial novel, in that it was violently attacked, as was Waugh himself, by Ernest Oldmeadow, editor of the Catholic *Tablet*:

> The novel in question is about an imaginary island in the Indian Ocean, ruled by a black Emperor. Prudence, daughter of the British Minister at the Emperor's court, goes up to the unsavoury room (the soapy water unemptied) of Basil, a man she hardly knows, and, after saying 'You might have shaved' and 'Please help with my boots,' stays till there is 'a banging on the door.' In the end, Basil, at a cannibal feast, unwittingly helps to eat the body of Prudence 'stewed to pulp amid peppers and aromatic roots.' In working out this foul invention, Mr. Waugh gives us disgusting passages. We are introduced to a young couple dining in bed, with 'a bull terrier and a chow flirting on their feet.' The young wife suddenly calls out 'Oh God he's made a mess again'; and Basil exclaims 'How dirty the bed is.' These nasty details are not necessary to the story. (CH, 133)

Twelve prominent Catholics, including three Jesuits, sprang to Waugh's defence, claiming Oldmeadow had exceeded "The bounds of legitimate criticism" (CH, 132), and expressing their regard for Waugh as Catholic and as novelist. Waugh himself was out of the country on the publication date. However, on his return he defended himself, at length, in "AN OPEN LETTER TO HIS EMINENCE THE CARDINAL ARCHBISHOP OF WESTMINSTER" (L, 72-78), who was not only the leading churchman of the Catholic Church in England, but Oldmeadow's employer. Among very many points Waugh made is this one, referring to the presence of a Catholic character in the novel: "I could point out that the only wholly admirable character is the only Catholic, a White Father missionary, and the only wholly contemptible one a French atheist" (L, 74).

Nearly seventy years later it is hard to imagine that so wonderfully frivolous a novel could cause such a stir, even though religion crops up on many pages. Waugh spares few denominations or sects as he describes the chaos of Azanian life:

> [Amurath's] Nestorian upbringing had strengthened his hand throughout in his dealings with the white men. Now he declared Christianity the official religion of the Empire, reserving complete freedom of conscience to his Mohammedan and pagan subjects. He allowed and encouraged an influx of missionaries. There were soon three Bishops in Debra Dowa - Anglican, Catholic and Nestorian - and three substantial cathedrals. There were also Quaker, Moravian, American-Baptist, Mormon and Swedish-Lutheran

> missions handsomely supported by foreign subscribers. All this brought money into the new capital and enhanced his reputation abroad. (BM, 12-13)

Various religious practices are brought in, from the colonisers' perspective, to add local colour:

> But next day Prudence and William went out with the ponies. She had an assignation with Basil.
>
> 'Listen, William, you're to go out of the city by the lane behind the Baptist school and the Jewish abattoirs, then past the Parsee death-house and the fever hospital.'
>
> 'Not exactly the prettiest ride.'
>
> 'Darling, don't be troublesome. You might get seen the other way. Once you're clear of the Arab cemetery you can go where you like. And you're to fetch me at Youkoumian's at five.' (BM, 140)

The native religious views are also presented. These were Nestorian but have developed heretical and hilarious accretions:

> The Monastery of St. Mark the Evangelist, though infected of late with the taint of heresy, was the centre of Azanian spiritual life. Here in remote times Nestorian missionaries from Mesopotamia had set up a church, and here, when the great Amurath proclaimed Christianity the official creed of the Empire, the old foundations had been unearthed and a native community installed. A well-substantiated tradition affirmed that the little river watering the estate was, in fact, the brook Kedron conveyed there subterraneously; its waters were in continual requisition for the relief of skin diseases and stubborn boils. Here too were preserved, among other relics of less certain authenticity, David's stone prised out of the forehead of Goliath (a boulder of astonishing dimensions), a leaf from the Barren Fig Tree, the rib from which Eve had been created and a wooden cross which had fallen from heaven quite unexpectedly during Good Friday luncheon some years back. Architecturally, however, there was nothing very remarkable: no cloister or ambulatory, library, gallery, chapter house or groined refectory. A cluster of mud huts around a larger hut; a single stone building, the Church dedicated to St. Mark by Amurath the Great. It could be descried from miles around, perched on a site of supreme beauty, a shelf of the great escarpment that overlooked the Wanda lowlands, and through it the brook Kedron, narrowed at this season to a single thread of silver, broke into innumerable iridescent cascades as it fell to join the sluggish Izol five thousand feet below. Great rocks of volcanic origin littered the fields. The hillside was full of unexplored caverns whence hyenas sallied out at night to exhume the corpses which it was a pious practice to transport from all over the empire to await the last trump on that holy ground. (BM, 172-73)

In his letter to the Cardinal Archbishop, Waugh referred to the above passage, suggesting "that the Editor of *The Tablet* has never heard of the Nestorians and taking the name to be a disguise for a Latin order of monks, read the passage as though I had accused a Carthusian or a Benedictine house of such credulity" (L, 75).

Throughout his letter Waugh proclaims his faithfulness to Catholicism, but points out, for example:

> There is in my book...a Pageant of Birth Control. Perhaps the pages describing it *are* "silly," but it is not for silliness, surely, that I am being vilified? Like all Catholics I regard Birth Control as a practice which is a personal sin and an insidious social evil, but I know, and the Editor of *The Tablet* must also know if he ever spares himself time from insulting his fellow Catholics to converse with ordinary people of the world, that it is not so regarded by the vast majority of educated Englishmen and women today. (L, 76)

The manner in which Waugh describes the pageant, and the propaganda for birth control, is clearly not one which favoured the practice. It becomes yet one more piece of the satiric farce which is *Black Mischief*, as can be seen in the description and reception of a poster:

> It portrayed two contrasted scenes. On one side a native hut of hideous squalor, overrun with children of every age, suffering from every physical incapacity - crippled, deformed, blind, spotted and insane; the father prematurely aged with paternity squatted by an empty cook-pot; through the door could be seen his wife, withered and bowed with child bearing, desperately hoeing at their inadequate crop. On the other side a bright parlour furnished with chairs and table; the mother, young and beautiful, sat at her ease eating a huge slice of raw meat; her husband smoked a long Arab hubble-bubble (still a caste mark of leisure throughout the land), while a single healthy child sat between them reading a newspaper. Inset between the two pictures was a detailed drawing of some up-to-date contraceptive apparatus and the words in Sakuyu: WHICH HOME DO YOU CHOOSE?...
>
> Nowhere was there any doubt about the meaning of the beautiful new pictures.
>
> SEE: on right hand: there is rich man: smoke pipe like big chief: but his wife she no good: sit eating meat: and rich man no good: he only one son.
>
> SEE: on the left hand: poor man: not much to eat: but his wife she very good, work hard in field: man he good too: eleven children: one very

> mad, very holy. And in the middle: Emperor's juju. Make you like that good man with eleven children. (BM, 146-47)

There is, however, a Catholic element in the novel to which neither Waugh nor Oldmeadow refers. In the early pages of *Black Mischief* the atmosphere of an evening in Azania is described:

> Evening and a small stir of life. Muezzin in the minaret. Allah is great. There is no Allah but Allah and Mohammed is his prophet. Angelus from the mission church. *Ecce ancilla Domini: fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum*. Mr Youkoumian behind the bar of the Amurath Café and Universal Stores mixed himself a sundowner of mastika and water. (BM, 18)

The words, "Ecce ancilla Domini: fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum" are from St. Luke's Gospel, i.38, in the *Vulgate*. In the King James' *Bible* the words are, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." Chapter and verse are the same as in the *Vulgate*. Historically "chapter friars were exhorted to propagate the Salutation of the Virgin at the sound of the bell for compline, a custom which grew into what is known as the Angelus."[18] This age-old, once only European, Catholic sound of a bell, is heard along with Muslim calls, even in darkest, heretical Azania. Not even Basil Seal's extraordinary presence can damp its sound.

Azania is an independent empire, in the hands, during the novel, of four very upheaval-prone rulers. The passage just quoted gives an account of life during the early days of the reign of Emperor Seth. At this stage many countries have sent ambassadors and envoys, armies collide and diplomats do little. After the deaths of Seth and the aged usurper Achon a great change comes over Azania. It "had lately been mandated by the League of Nations as a joint protectorate" (BM, 233) of England and France. The country is run with remarkable efficiency by hordes of middle-class English and French civil servants. Everything works. The district magistrate, Mr. Reppington, and his wife are driving home in

the early evening, to their bungalow, like all the other bungalows, in a small two-seater. Reppington remarks: "'The little bus took that nicely.' Angelus from the mission church...*gratia plena; Dominus tecum; benedicta tu in mulieribus...*" (BM, 234). Emperors have come and gone, Basil Seal has come and gone. The outside world cares nothing for Azania, but still, over all, is the continuing sound of the Angelus, reminding the reader of the words of the *Ave Maria*. The presence of the Angelus bells, bracketing the events of *Black Mischief*, counterbalances, for the thoughtful reader, references to birth control and cannibalism. This helps to make the point that, almost in spite of itself, *Black Mischief* is a Catholic novel by a Catholic author.

Such overt signs of Catholicism are notably lacking in *A Handful of Dust*:

> Waugh noted in 1946 that *A Handful of Dust*, his favourite book until he wrote *Brideshead*, "dealt entirely with behaviour. It was humanist and contained all I had to say about humanism." Waugh apparently meant by this term specifically secular, anthropocentric philosophies. Thus in quite a different way from *Black Mischief*, this novel illustrates the assertion in "Converted to Rome" that "civilization...has not in itself the power of survival..." (Da, 85)

Waugh also said, in "Converted to Rome":

> Most important of all, it seems to me that any religious body which is not by nature universal cannot claim to represent complete Christianity. I mean this as a difference in kind, not in extent. The Church in the first century, when its membership was numerically negligible, was by nature as universal as in the times of the Crusaders; but many religious sects seem to pride themselves upon exclusion, regarding themselves as peculiar people set aside for salvation. Others claim regional loyalty. Those who regard conversion to Roman Catholicism as an unpatriotic defection - a surrender to Italian domination - seem to miss the whole idea of universality. (E, 104)

So, once again here is a description of the Catholicism that Christianity must be, and it is singularly lacking in *A Handful of Dust*. There is only one passing reference to a Catholic character: Thérèse de Vitré describes a school-fellow, Antoinette who, daringly,

possessed rouge and lipstick and "came to Mass on Sunday wearing it" (HD, 163). Thérèse goes on to remark that she has little choice of men to marry as "They must be Catholic and of an island family" (HD, 163).

The Anglican church is more present but no more important:

> Tony invariably wore a dark suit on Sundays and a stiff white collar. He went to church, where he sat in a large pitch-pine pew, put in by his great-grandfather at the time of rebuilding the house, furnished with very high crimson hassocks and a fireplace, complete with iron gate and a little poker which his father used to rattle when any point in the sermon excited his disapproval. Since his father's day a fire had not been laid there; Tony had it in mind to revive the practice next winter. On Christmas Day and Harvest Thanksgiving Tony read the lessons from the back of the brass eagle. (HD, 130)

This approach to church-going, to "worship," has been emptied of all Christian content. It has been reduced to an exercise in fake feudalism; the church is a godless place. Tony poses "as an upright, God-fearing gentleman of the old school" (HD, 30). He is prepared to see this pose as a joke, as Brenda does, but it still pleases him. Even the vicar cannot be seen as a man of God. He is simply a not quite sane old colonial who, to the delight of his parishioners, preaches the same sermon every Christmas, as though addressing troops in the heat of India or Egypt.

A Handful of Dust recounts the collapse of Tony Last's marriage to his wife, Brenda, because of her infatuation with the shiftless John Beaver. It also tells of the death of their small son, John Andrew. Much of the novel describes Brenda's trivial life in London. By contrast, Tony, deprived of wife and child, sets out for South America to see what he can discover. All he really finds is the illiterate and mad Mr. Todd, living alone in the jungle. Todd has a passion for Dickens and imprisons Tony so that he can be read to. Tony is

presumed dead and his crumbling house, Hetton Abbey, passes to his petit-bourgeois relations.

The story of *A Handful of Dust* is essentially one of amorality, with occasional touches of immorality. Those who survive best are the hyenas like John and Mrs. Beaver. By the very absence of Catholicism from this novel, taken in the context provided by "Converted to Rome," Waugh offers his readers a moral tale which should help them distinguish "between Christianity and Chaos" (E, 103). There is virtually no Christianity in this text, so whether the scene is at Hetton Abbey, in the South American jungle, in London or aboard ship, there is always the same Chaos. So absent is Catholicism that one might say that, by paradoxical default, this is the most Catholic of Waugh's early novels. The very absence of Catholicism allows the complete triumph of Chaos. The conclusions of *A Handful of Dust* have echoes similar to the end of *Vile Bodies*, though on the surface they are dissimilar.

Tony Last, alive though proclaimed dead, is condemned to spend his life reading Dickens to the crazily cunning Mr. Todd. Although there is a hideous false tranquillity to this end, it is still a version of Chaos. Meanwhile, at Hetton Abbey another type of orderly Chaos exists as the "poor" Lasts turn it into a successful angora rabbit and silver fox farm. Hetton is to be preserved, but at what spiritual cost. If one considers these two Chaoses with some of Waugh's words from "Converted to Rome" in mind one sees precisely how *A Handful of Dust*, published in 1934, represents "the real nature of [a] loss of faith" (E, 104), as only Catholic eyes and mind could see it, and saw it already in 1930:

> It seems to me that in the present state of European history the essential issue is no longer between Catholicism, on one side, and Protestantism, on the other, but between Christianity and Chaos.... Today we

> can see [loss of faith] on all sides as the active negation of all that western culture stood for. Civilization - and by this I do not mean talking cinemas and tinned food, nor even surgery and hygienic houses, but the whole moral and artistic organization of Europe - has not in itself the power of survival. It came into being through Christianity, and without it has no significance or power to command allegiance. The loss of faith in Christianity and the consequential lack of confidence in moral and social standards have become embodied in the ideal of a materialistic, mechanized state,... (E, 103-04)

Besides all the adult Lasts and their two Chaoses, there are in *A Handful of Dust* two other characters who embody materialism and the collapse of morality, John Beaver and his mother. John is an entirely amoral, materialistic, almost professional, adulterer. His mother is immoral, for she knows what she does, as a practitioner of the seemingly innocuous profession of interior decoration. She perverts the use of solid old houses by buying them, cramming them with chromium plate and glass, and dividing them into small flats that she sells at vast profit as *pieds-à-terre* for would-be adulterers like Brenda Last. Mrs. Beaver prostitutes houses. All this Waugh sees and recounts so that one is aware both of his underlying sense of loss and Chaos and of his historian's indignation at the violation of historic objects.

Although it is my hope to demonstrate that Waugh's novels contain far more Catholicism than is generally supposed, it would be ridiculous to try to discover something that is patently not there in *Scoop*. To quote Rose Macaulay:

> ...This gay fantasy...is extremely funny, entirely good-tempered, and of considerable brilliance. If anyone in it is a Roman Catholic or a Protestant, Mr. Waugh does not mention it; religion does not throw its fatal apple of discord among the *dramatis personae*; every one gets fair treatment, every one is ridiculous, and the whole scene of delicious absurdity. (CH, 202)

Macaulay is almost correct, save for the facts that Uncle Theodore delights in singing hymns--"Change and decay in all around I see" (Sc, 17); Nannie Bloggs confines her reading to "the Bible and the Turf Guide" (Sc, 19); and Jakes the journalist is forced by sheer boredom and

lack of information to fabricate the scandal that "*The Archbishop of Canterbury, who it is well known, is behind Imperial Chemicals...*"(Sc, 102). *Scoop* is simply a farcical account of mistaken identities, the lunacy of journalese and the amazing possibilities of supplies for long African journeys--inflatable everything, including Christmas dinner. *Scoop* also has a relatively happy ending. If it contains any serious message, the message is that the Press has considerable power to manipulate the course of political events, even if accidentally, a message Waugh had already given in *Remote People*: "'Getting in first with the news' and 'giving the public what it wants,' the two dominating principles of Fleet Street, are not always reconcilable."[19]

William Boot, author of the country column "Lush Places" for Lord Copper's *The Beast*, is confused with his more worldly relative, John Boot, and sent to the African country of Ishmaelia to report on a war there. Nothing is happening and William sends back long, chatty telegrams to confirm this. His performance enrages staff at *The Beast*, and Lord Copper, and he is ordered home. By accident, before he can comply, he achieves a scoop. *En passant* he has also managed to help an enigmatic young woman, Kätchen, who enjoys many of his supplies. Returning to England in triumph he first creates havoc for Mr. Salter, the unhappy foreign editor of *The Beast*, and then fails to attend a banquet in his own honour, sending Uncle Theodore instead. Uncle Theodore also takes a job offered to William. By the end of the novel all is almost right with the world. This is true even for the manipulative Mrs. Stitch, whose interference started the confusion, and for the unattractive and self-serving journalists, Corker and Pigge. All have potentially happy futures:

> A future for Uncle Theodore such as he had always at heart believed to be attainable. Two thousand a year, shady little gentlemen's chambers, the opportunity for endless reminiscence; sunlit morning saunterings down St.

> James's Street between hatter and boot-maker and club; feline prowlings after dark; a buttonhole, a bowler hat with a curly brim, a clouded malacca cane, a kindly word to commissionaires and cab drivers.
>
> A future for Mr. Salter as art director of *Home Knitting*; punctual domestic dinners; Sunday at home among the crazy pavements.
>
> A future for Sir John Boot with the cropped amazons of the Antarctic.
>
> A future for Mrs. Stitch heaped with the spoils of every continent and every century, gadgets from New York and bronzes from the Aegean, new entrées and old friends.
>
> A future for Corker and Pigge; they had travelled six hundred miles by now and were nearing the Sudanese frontier. Soon they will be kindly received by a District Commissioner, washed and revictualled and set on their way home.
>
> A future for Kätchen.... (Sc, 221)

For nearly all the characters of *Scoop*, the action of "change and decay" is much in evidence: change for those characters with a future, on-going decay for Boot Magna Hall, the continuation of a long-established process. Only for William Boot has there been neither real change nor obvious decay, despite his travels and journalistic experiences, which might have been expected to mark most people indelibly. Returned to England he takes up, as though without break, his column "Lush Places" for *The Beast*. His future is his past, his life returns, essentially untouched, to its former stasis. Even the fact that he has, at the beginning of his journey, realised the one significant ambition of his life, to fly, an ambition cherished for fifteen years, has done little if anything to alter him. Perhaps this is because his ambition was not to go somewhere by aeroplane, but simply to go up in one--a very limited vision of aeronautical possibilities.

However, his aeroplane flight, which allows him to offer a lift to the mysterious Mr. Baldwin, does allow a kind of god to enter *Scoop*, but not any form of Christian God. It is, as Frederick Stopp has pointed out, a parodic version of the *deus ex machina* of Greek drama:

> 'Was there not even in the remorseless dooms of antiquity a god from the machine?' In answer there appears the implored god from the flying-machine,

> and solves all William's problems: Mr. Baldwin lands delicately with his parachute on the tin roof and requests a ladder courteously in five languages. All is now in the hands of the gods, and their fortune-child, William. (St, 87)

This episode, far from bringing change, makes possible William Boot's return to his areligious former life.

As it has been shown that there is so little here to do with God, religion or Catholicism, there should be at least conjecture about why this is so. First, that *Scoop* is a farce makes it a less than ideal medium to discuss things religious. The buffoonery of farce may not make it necessarily at odds with the presentation of religious ideas, but there seem to be few farces in which God plays a large part. The Devil is a frequent performer in farce, or farcical scenes, from Mystery plays on; but there is no real devil figure in *Scoop*. Lord Copper, the closest contender, is too powerless, for he is really managed by his apparently timid staff and the vagaries of his digestion.

Perhaps some of the sketchily recorded events of Waugh's life in 1937 and 1938 explain his need to produce a novel that was principally one of light relief. Waugh had acquired Piers Court, a large house in need of repairs, in 1937. It still required major attention in 1938:

> Work in the house: stripping, not with perfect success, of the library chimney piece.... We have begun levelling the land outside the drawing-room window, and I propose to level the slope, bringing the lawn opposite the front door. Negotiations with the West Gloucestershire Power Company go on slowly; I have agreed to pay £120 if they will connect me by the end of March. Mrs. Audry threatens to build a cottage in the further end of the two arable fields which originally went with Piers Court. (D, 430)

In addition to these domestic activities, Waugh had twice to go to London as a director of Chapman and Hall, for the publishing house was being sued by the Gas, Light and Coal Company. Bitterly, he severed connections with the periodical *Night and Day* (D, 430).

Laura succumbed to appendicitis. Both Waugh and his wife also spent a considerable amount of time in Mexico, preparing for *Lawless Roads* (L, 118-19). So it should not seem surprising if Waugh chose to write a light-weight novel free of his otherwise almost constant Catholic preoccupations. This is not to suggest that Waugh's writing was overcome by circumstances, simply that he chose to write in a particular fashion, given the circumstances.

It is equally unsurprising that in his next novel, *Put Out More Flags* (1942), God, Catholicism and other forms of religion are very much present. An element of the farce in *Scoop* remains, but it is there as a spice rather than as the substance of the novel. *Put Out More Flags* reintroduces Basil Seal, this time creating largely profitable chaos, or his own bent sense of order, in England in the first years of the Second World War. The cast of characters includes left-overs from the Bright Young People era: Peter Pastmaster, formerly Beste-Chetwynde, and his mother; unhappy Angela Lyne, who, once divorced, will marry Basil; Barbara Sothill, Basil's beautiful and more responsible sister, a practising Catholic; and atheist Ambrose Silk, the most intelligent and intellectual character Waugh has invented so far and a precursor of *Brideshead's* Anthony Blanche. The plot, a loose one, is the mostly bad, nearly mad and occasionally dangerous doings of this group.

Although the farcical tone may suggest to some that *Put Out More Flags* is a slight piece of work, it has, instead, not particularly hidden depths. A.A. DeVitis sees some of these:

> *Put Out More Flags* lacks the spontaneity of *Decline and Fall* and *Vile Bodies*, the ironic perspective of *A Handful of Dust*. Occasionally it rises to the comic heights of its predecessors in its portrayal of the Connollies [sic], the ordinary man's version of Peter Pastmaster and Basil Seal. In *Put Out More Flags* Waugh portrays the Bright Young People grown old. Basil Seal's pranks, charming in a handsome rascal of twenty one, are tedious in an aging gasbag of thirty eight. Not only do the Bright Young People grow up, but they find

> it necessary to atone for what had before never been offenses. It is Poppet Green, the surrealist artist, who prepares the stage for the explicit religious statements of *Brideshead Revisited*:
>
> > I wish I'd been to Church. I was brought up in a convent. I wanted to be a nun once. I wish I was a nun. Where's my gas mask? I shall go mad if I don't find my gas mask.[20]

Much as I would like to agree with DeVitis it seems to me that Poppet Green's hysterical outburst is simply that, not a rediscovery of religion, but a reflex action. This is not to deny that there is religious content in *Put Out More Flags*, especially in the religious department--a very "catholic" department--in the Ministry of Information. For example:

> Ambrose's post as sole representative of atheism in the religious department was not, at this stage of the war, one of great importance. He was in no position, had he wished it, to introduce statuary into his quarters. He had for his use a single table and a single chair. He shared a room, and a secretary with a fanatical young Roman Catholic layman who never tired of exposing discrepancies between *Mein Kampf* and the encyclical *Quadragesima Anno*, a bland Nonconformist minister, and a Church of England clergyman who had been brought in to succeed the importer of the mahogany prie-dieu. 'We must re-orientate ourselves to Geneva,' this cleric said; 'the first false step was taken when the Lytton report was shelved.' He argued long and gently, the Roman Catholic argued long and fiercely, while the Nonconformist sat as a bemused umpire between them. Ambrose's task consisted in representing to British and colonial atheists that Nazism was at heart agnostic with a strong tinge of religious superstition; he envied the lot of his colleagues who had at their finger-tips long authentic summaries of suppressed Sunday Schools, persecuted monks, and pagan Nordic rites. His was uphill work; he served a small and critical public; but whenever he discovered in the pile of foreign newspapers which passed from desk to desk any reference to German church-going, he circulated it to the two or three magazines devoted to his cause. He counted up the number of times the word 'God' appeared in Hitler's speeches and found the sum impressive; he wrote a pointed little article to show that Jew-baiting was religious in origin. He did his best, but time lay heavy on his hands and, more and more, as the winter wore on, he found himself slipping away from his rancorous colleagues, to the more human companionship of Mr Bentley. (POMF, 110)

There are also Ambrose Silk's atheistic musings on religion:

> It is a curious thing, he thought, that every creed promises a paradise which will be absolutely uninhabitable for anyone of civilized taste. Nanny told me of a Heaven that was full of angels playing harps; the communists tell me of

> an earth full of leisured and contented factory hands. I don't see Basil getting past the gate of either. Religion is acceptable in its destructive phase; the desert monks carving up that humbug Hypatia; the anarchist gangs roasting the monks in Spain. Hellfire sermons in the chapels; soap-box orators screaming their envy of the rich. Hell is all right. The human mind is inspired enough when it comes to inventing horrors; it is when it tries to invent a Heaven that it shows itself cloddish. But Limbo is the place. In Limbo one has natural happiness without the beatific vision; no harps; no communal order; but wine and conversation and imperfect, various humanity. Limbo for the unbaptized, for the pious heathen, the sincere sceptic. Am I baptized into this modern world? (POMF, 59-60)

An interesting contrast with Ambrose's atheism appears when he is duped by Basil Seal into fleeing to Catholic Ireland, clad in clerical garb and carrying the stolen passport of one Father Flanagan. Thus another, this time "Catholic," allusion to religion is introduced. As Ambrose's fate at the end of the novel is indeterminate, one may wonder if something is to come of his musings and his sudden translation into a Catholic priest, even though the soutane is quickly abandoned once in Ireland. What is very clear is that the intellectually well-equipped Ambrose has a firm grasp of religious ideas, many of them Catholic, even if he chooses disbelief for himself. In one way and another Waugh's most fully described atheist brings obviously Catholic vignettes into *Put Out More Flags*.

However, I believe there is evidence of Waugh's sense of Catholic propriety running through the novel. Frequently, throughout the text, the Lord's name is taken in vain. This blasphemous use of two parts of the Trinity has a singularly Catholic flavour. For similar examples one has to look to the mindless oaths of characters invented to live in the rabidly Catholic Quebec of Maurice Duplessis by Gérard Bessette and Roch Carrier. In each case, the character who speaks is rather less than admirable. Except once, only out of unbelieving mouths do blasphemies come. There are several examples: Poppet Green, confronted by the dual prospect of being bombed or drowned at sea shrieks, "'For God's sake don't say that.'

Even as she spoke the sirens wailed. Poppet stood paralysed with horror. 'Oh God,' she said" (POMF, 136). There is the dreadful girl-woman evacuee who appears with her equally appalling brother and sister at Malfrey, "'Jesus,' said Doris. 'You aren't going to leave us here'" (POMF, 91), or the unattractive Captain Mayfield, losing his temper as practice action goes too slowly, "For Christ's sake, Smallwood, you ought to be half-way up the ridge by this time" (POMF, 132). Peter Pastmaster frequently calls on God. He cries, "Well for God's sake get up," to Angela Lyne, as she sits, drunk, on the pavement. Angela herself, pestered by her husband and child, cries, "Cedric...for God's sake don't let him be a bore" (POMF, 171). Angela brings Basil to blasphemy, "Oh for Christ's sake," when she begins to cry drunkenly. Godless Ambrose still manages, under stress, to call on God, asking Basil, "Why for God's sake?" (POMF, 197) when he is told he must, for safety's sake, walk to the station rather than take a taxi. Even almost pious Barbara Sothill is reduced to, "Oh, no, Freddy, for God's sake" (POMF, 136) when her husband suggests that an army camp be brought into the Park. If *Put Out More Flags* has a heroine it is Barbara Sothill, and she is an observant, if not totally devout, Catholic. Therefore, to hear her say "for God's sake" is to hear it used with far more conscious blasphemy than when it is on the lips of unbelievers for whom, with the exception of Ambrose, God is merely a word.

Christopher Sykes agrees that Barbara has great charm, and sees her as the first example of Waugh's not being "the prisoner of this monstrous regiment of women" (S, 286). No one could dispute Barbara's charm and attractiveness, but Waugh himself made her considerably, though delightfully, less than perfect. He wrote to his father: "Glad you liked most of *Put Out More Flags*. It is a minor work dashed off to occupy a tedious voyage, but it has good bits such as the half incestuous relationship of Basil and Barbara" (L, 158). Alan

Pryce-Jones sums up the religious bent of both author and book: "...since 'A Handful of Dust' appeared the author himself has been taking shape behind his creations, and in this latest book his position is quite clearly defined. Catholic; good" (CH, 215).

Put Out More Flags is Waugh's last complete novel before *Brideshead Revisited*. However, as some critics consider his next published piece, a fragment called *Work Suspended*, pivotal, it must be considered here. *Work Suspended* was begun in 1939, but published after *Put Out More Flags*, in 1942. Martin Stannard concludes that "*Work Suspended* is the most enigmatic of Waugh's writings. Its mockery of socialism and philistinism is quite in keeping with his role as the right-wing Catholic apologist defending 'civilisation' from the 'barbarians',..."[21] This may be true, but if it is, the message is so subtle as to be invisible, at least to me. There is no sense here, as there is in *Vile Bodies* and *A Handful of Dust*, of a Catholic author perceiving and describing Godless Chaos.

Whatever one thinks of Stannard's view of *Work Suspended*, he does give a concise account of its story.

> The central figure, John Plant, is a fastidious and urbane thriller writer. He returns from Fez to England after his father is killed in a road accident by a travelling salesman called Atwater.[22] The father, an artist, is luridly described as fulfilling the 'broken promise' of nineteenth-century subject painting. Plant himself discovers that he is undergoing a climacteric and cannot write. He becomes emotionally involved with Lucy, the pregnant wife of Roger Simmonds, an old Socialist friend. Plant decides to abandon his nomadic existence and settles in the country. Towards the end of the work, Humboldt's Gibbon (in the London Zoo) appears to have some symbolic relevance to this analysis of artistic and domestic transformation. The story concludes with the birth of Lucy's baby.[23]

Critics as diverse as Stopp (St, 101-07), Sykes (S, 305-06) and Davis (Da, 108) regard this as a major transition piece for Waugh, breaking ground to allow work like *Brideshead Revisited* and *Sword of Honour* to appear. Waugh himself seemed pleased with the piece: "I have

rewritten the first chapter of the novel about six times and at last got it into tolerable shape" (D, 433). A month later he wrote to John Betjeman, "I enclose the first chapter of a novel I was writing and have discontinued. It would have been O.K." (L, 127). This un-Wavian last sentence in a way sums up my difficulty with finding *Work Suspended* important or 'good' prose. And eventually, Waugh agreed. In a letter to John Betjeman in January, 1944 he wrote: "Damn it I gave you a copy of *Suspenders* - a work of less merit [than Betjeman's *Continued Dew*] but almost equal scarcity" (L, 175). This may be flippant, but it is also telling and does not seem to have been remarked before.

The following passage, presumably intended to be amusing in the telling, and in the 'wit' of the final sentence, is unremarkable in style and also uninformative as far as the life of the 'hero' John Plant is concerned:

> My worries at this period became symbolized in a single problem; what to do with my hats. I owned what now seemed a multitude of them, of one sort and another; two of them silk - the tall hat I took to weddings and a second I had bought some years earlier when I thought for a time that I was going to take to fox-hunting; there were a bowler, a panama, a black, a brown and a grey soft hat, a green hat from Salzburg, a sombrero, some tweed caps for use on board ship and in trains - all these had accumulated from time to time and all, with the possible exception of the sombrero, were more or less indispensable. Was I doomed for the rest of my life to travel everywhere with this preposterous collection? At the moment they were, most of them, in St. John's Wood, but, any day now, the negotiations for the sale might be finished and the furniture removed, sold or sent to store.
>
> Somewhere to hang up my hat, that was what I needed. (WS, 131-32)

Plant has led a drab, tediously organised life in Fez where even his weekly visit to a brothel is as routine and uninteresting as the description of his similarly weekly bath.

The following, quoted from Sykes' biography, shows another very different style operating in *Work Suspended*, but this emotionalism seems incredible from the lips of John Plant, even though he is in love. He has an entirely chaste love for Lucy Simmonds, the

increasingly pregnant wife of Plant's best friend, Roger Simmonds. Sykes comments on, and cites, the "emotional prose":

> The third surprising feature of the book is the most unexpected, and, looking back on his whole work, the least welcome to many minds. It is to be found in the change of style. For the first time since *Decline and Fall* Evelyn allowed himself to luxuriate in emotional prose...
>
> > To write of someone loved, of oneself loving, above all of oneself being loved - how can these things be done with propriety? How can they be done at all? ...Love, which has its own life, its laws of sleep and waking, its health and sickness, growth, death and immortality, its ignorance and knowledge, experiment and mastery - how can one relate this hooded stranger to the men and women with whom he keeps pace? It is a problem beyond the proper scope of letters. (S, 307)

As platonic lovers, Plant and Lucy spend much of their time together at the zoo, pausing longest before the cage of a Humboldt's gibbon. "Humboldt's Gibbon seemed disinclined for company. He sat hunched up at the back of his cage, fixing on me a steady and rather bilious stare. He was never, at the best of times, an animal who courted popularity" (WS, 178). This is the gibbon to which Stannard refers, without elucidation. The creature is an ancestor of the gibbon that is to appear much later in *Helena*. "An Indian ape, the recent expensive present of a visiting diplomat, rattled his gold chain on the terrace" (H, 77). Later the gibbon becomes the subject of conversation between Helena and Lactantius, but all that happened was that "the gibbon...fretted his golden chain and chattered for fruit" (H, 80).

Obviously these references to a gibbon are, for Waugh, filled with both historical and religious meaning, as well as being a running pun on Edmund Gibbon. The man best known as the author of the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* was, besides being a historian, a one-time Catholic convert who reconverted to Protestantism and then became a very hostile

antagonist to the Church. For at least two reasons Waugh must have enjoyed dragging Gibbon's name into his texts in the guise of an ape. Gibbon had both abandoned Waugh's Church, and he had also chronicled the collapse of the Empire that gave its name to Waugh's Church.

However, with the exception of often missed small jokes like this, *Work Suspended* is essentially dull. Reading about the monotonous pattern that constitutes Plant's and Lucy's love affair is itself monotonous. Surely it is the mark of an accomplished novelist to transmit monotony to a reader without allowing the prose, the descriptions, to be themselves monotonous. The love affair ends immediately after the child is born and all Lucy's as yet really unexpressed emotion is fixed on her son.

There are some passing references to Catholicism and religion, but they lack the power they radiate in all Waugh's other novels. John Plant is early introduced as the author of *Vengeance at the Vatican* (WS, 107), a murder mystery. His father is "a dogmatic atheist of the old-fashioned cast and would not have set anything down which might be construed as apostasy" (WS, 110). Plant senior "never came to hear much of Marxism; had he done so he would, I am sure, have discovered a number of proofs of the existence of God" (WS, 112). Indeed, he is, or was, interested in Catholicism:

> ... he used once to profess an esteem for Roman Catholics. 'Their religious opinions are preposterous,' he said. 'But so were those of the ancient Greeks. Think of Socrates spending half his last evening babbling about the topography of the nether world. Grant them their first absurdities and you will find Roman Catholics a reasonable people - and they have civilised habits.' Later, however, when he saw signs of this view gaining acceptance, he became convinced of the existence of a Jesuit conspiracy to embroil the world in war, and wrote several letters to *The Times* on the subject.... But in neither of these periods did his opinions greatly affect his personal relations; Jews and Catholics were among his closest friends all his life. (WS, 113)

Atwater, the creeping little commercial traveller has, supposedly, a friend, Appleby. Appleby, through some tenuous connections, seems to know where Jesuit treasure is to be found. Atwater longs for the money this would provide:

> Appleby knew of a cave in Bolivia where the Jesuits, in bygone years, had stored their treasure.... More than this, Appleby had an aerial photograph of the locality, and by a special process known to himself, was able to treat the plate so that auriferous ground came out dark; the hill where the Jesuits had left their treasure was almost solid black.... Our conversation, I think, was mainly about Appleby and the need of finding him. We rang up one or two people of that name, whom we found in the telephone book, but they disclaimed all knowledge of Jesuit treasure. (WS, 182/187)

But, generally speaking, the Catholic content of *Work Suspended*, even if it supposed to be amusing, is no more successful than the laborious wit of the rest of the fragment.

All in all *Work Suspended* is a failed experiment rather than a pivotal piece of work. Admittedly first person narrative, a less clearly satiric mode, and an "artist hero" appear in *Brideshead Revisited*. But there they work. At most *Work Suspended* should be seen as an unsuccessful practice piece rather than a pivotal one. *Work Suspended*, which apparently died of inanition, might better be called *Work Petered Out*.

Work Suspended, and *Scoop* are, apparently, Waugh's least accomplished early works. Both largely or entirely lack significant religious content. Although there may be other explanations, it appears that what is missing is a key element of all Waugh's successful novels--Catholicism.

Stannard is convinced that Waugh deliberately did not finish *Work Suspended* for more positive reasons:

> 'Objectivity' in his post-war work relies on the assumption of a higher reality ultimately governing the action, where the 'determining character of the human soul' is 'that of being God's creature with a defined purpose.' No such dimension had been built into *Work Suspended* and Waugh may have

> decided that to continue his normal, externalised analysis of behaviour was meaningless;...[24]

Though his opinion is largely at odds with mine, as far as the quality of *Work Suspended* is concerned, it is interesting to note that Stannard alludes again to Waugh's phrase, "the determining character of the human soul," and that he sees the absence of this character accounting for the unfinished state of *Work Suspended*. It is especially interesting as Stannard saw this character in *all* Waugh's earlier novels.

His view of the importance of a supernatural dimension as a vital force in English literature is by no means a new one. Graham Greene wrote in 1945:

> After the death of Henry James a disaster overtook the English novel.... For with the death of James the religious sense was lost to the English novel, and with the religious sense went the sense of the importance of the human act. It was as if the world of fiction had lost a dimension: the characters of such distinguished writers as Mrs. Woolf and Mr. E.M. Forster wandered like cardboard symbols through a world that was paper-thin. Even in one of the most materialistic of our great novelists - in Trollope - we are aware of another world against which the actions of the characters are thrown into relief. The ungainly clergyman,...stumbling through a proposal of marriage exists in a way that Mrs. Woolf's Mr. Ramsay never does, because we are aware that he exists not only to the woman he is addressing but also in God's eye.[25]

Greene still held this view in 1979, and had expanded it to include French literature. He cites Mauriac and Balzac as writers retaining the religious dimension, and Russian literature:

> Along the same lines I should say that very few good writers have emerged from the Communist world, with the exception of a Solzhenitsyn or a Pasternak or a Sinyavsky, who have in fact retained their sense of the religious.[26]

Littlewood agrees with Greene and Stannard about the effect of the "religious dimension" in literature, but fails to see it in any of the seven pieces of Waugh's fiction discussed here.

> The religious dimension can only have a place in a fictional world where the characters aspire to fully human status, and in most of his pre-war writings, even the non-fictional ones, this condition is not fulfilled. Whether we are talking about the mutilated criminals in *Remote People* or the hanged witnesses in *Black Mischief* or the unfortunate death of Lord Tangent in *Decline and Fall*, there is no sense in which we have to do with figures who could make any human claim on us. We are watching a performance in two dimensions, like the movement of puppets in a shadow play. (Li, 143)

John Andrew, only child of Brenda and Tony Last, neglected by both parents, particularly by his mother, badgered by a prim nanny and really happy only on his pony Thunderclap, with the groom Ben for company, is, though often comic, finally a truly pathetic figure. Is pathos possible if a character totally "fails to aspire to human status"? Just after John Andrew has at last taken Thunderclap successfully over a jump, nanny appears. She neither praises nor even notices his achievement. She simply scolds, "Oh dear, look at all the mud on your coat" (HD, 20). Not entirely without provocation, and certainly without much understanding, John Andrew calls his nanny "an old tart" and is thoroughly reprimanded by his father. "'When you grow up all this house and lots of other things besides will belong to you. You must learn to speak like someone who is going to have these things and to be considerate to people less fortunate than you, particularly women. Do you understand?' 'Is Ben less fortunate than me?'" (HD, 23). Hetton Abbey, John Andrew's heritage, is a near-ruin, and the Lasts are very short of money to maintain it. Ben, and here is the greatest pathos in the passage, spends all his time with the horses John Andrew loves. Brenda, John Andrew's neglectful mother is often in London, and missed. On her return she asks "What's all the news?" John Andrew pours out nearly a dozen pieces of information vitally important to him--jumping Thunderclap; the dead fish in the pond; a fox; a drawing; the carthorse's worms--all in one huge breathless sentence. "Nothing much has happened" (HD, 54), his father says, ignoring John Andrew completely. John Andrew is killed in a

hunting accident. Brenda, in London to continue her affair with John Beaver, is told that John is dead. At first she thinks of her lover, John. Then the truth dawns "John...John Andrew...I...oh, thank God..." (HD, 118). The tears that follow are tears of relief.

Rather similarly, Sir Samson Courteney in *Black Mischief* briefly attains pathos, a "religious dimension" and "fully human status":

> Prudence and William had left an inflated india-rubber sea-serpent behind them in the bathroom. Sir Samson sat in the warm water engrossed with it. He swished it down the water and caught it in his toes; he made waves for it; he blew it along; he sat on it and let it shoot up suddenly to the surface between his thighs; he squeezed some of the air out of it and made bubbles. Chance treats of this kind made or marred the happiness of the Envoy's day. Soon he was rapt in a daydream about the pleistocene age, where among mists and vast, unpeopled crags schools of deep-sea monsters splashed and sported; oh happy fifth day of creation, thought the Envoy Extraordinary, oh radiant infant sun, newly weaned from the breasts of darkness, oh rich steam of soggy continents, oh jolly whales and sea-serpents frisking in new brine.... (BM, 62-63)

With this at first ludicrous scene, Waugh actually manages to convey a good deal about Sir Samson's humanity. And with much the same gentleness as he occasionally described Prendergast, he paints a clear picture of the desperate boredom of diplomatic life, for someone patently ill-suited to it. The enormous value of tiny pleasures is made plain, and the wide-ranging possibilities of Sir Samson's imagination, here in a religious context because of the overt reference to the "happy fifth day of creation," become clear.

Very differently Ambrose Silk's atheistic reflections, though usually presented satirically, are part of a portrait of a man out of tune with his time, and suggest a fairly fully-developed character. One might even argue that Silk's atheism is, in mirror-image, a "religious dimension" of his character, in that atheism, like Christianity in whatever variation, is a state of belief. To deny the existence of God is as much a statement of faith as to assert it, agnosticism being the only "rational" stance.

Surely, with John Andrew, Sir Solomon and Ambrose Silk, Waugh offers his readers characters who are, in many senses, very fully, positively, human. Certainly with these and other characters, and numerous events, it is impossible to deny the religious, and not infrequently Catholic, elements of Evelyn Waugh's early novels. The fact that not every novel provides such evidence, surely does not undermine the case that from his earliest days as a novelist, and certainly when at his best, Waugh's fiction largely has a clearly defined religious, and very frequently a Catholic, dimension. It shows him, as his brother pointed out, first moving inexorably closer to full membership in the Catholic Church, and then writing as only a Catholic could.

CHAPTER III

Brideshead Revisited: Anti-Hero and False Faith

Critics as diverse in attitude as A.A. DeVitis and Frederick Stopp see Charles Ryder not only as the hero of *Brideshead Revisited*, but also as Evelyn Waugh's mouthpiece. For DeVitis:

> ...Waugh chose to represent his ideas through the views of Charles Ryder. All his moral commentaries are filtered through the consciousness of the hero; and to understand Ryder is to understand Waugh's meaning. By using Ryder as a skeptical onlooker who becomes spiritually involved in the religious and social dilemma of the Catholic world of Brideshead, Waugh is able to trace his theme and make his moral commentary at the same time.
>
> Charles Ryder serves then not only as the hero, but also as the author's link with the real world. Charles is, in fact, the logical development of the innocent who so constantly figured in the earlier satirical pieces. But he has succeeded in growing out of the adolescent stage into the adult world. He loses a good deal on the way, his innocence included, but he gains something more valuable in the long run. The characterization of Ryder, his complete integration into the plot, his stumbling search for permanence, his self-realization, afford Waugh an excellent opportunity to display his skill at portraiture, something that had been lacking in his earlier work.[1]

Although his work was published in the same year as DeVitis's, Stopp wrote both from a different perspective, and with a personal as well as a scholarly knowledge of Waugh. "...Mr. Waugh has chosen to mirror the whole of this [the world of *Brideshead*] through the...lawless, artistic, intuitive and romantic mind of an artist" (St, 112).

Davis sees things rather differently, and uses Waugh's epigraph to make the point that Ryder was not Waugh. "Waugh insisted on the distinction that appeared in every version of the text beginning with the carbon typescript: 'I am not I; thou art not he or she they are not they.'[2] Obviously Ryder is not Waugh" (Da, 123).

Who then is Ryder? For Heath he is a man with a vocation, one who has to undertake an "arduous journey towards the right kind of art." He "is the first Waugh

protagonist who successfully matures, and his maturation depends upon his acceptance of his unique purpose in God's design" (He, 161). I believe that there is considerable evidence to show that Charles Ryder is not the protagonist, but the antagonist who besets the true protagonists, God and the Roman Catholic Church. In 1945 Waugh wrote to Nancy Mitford that "the book is about God" (L, 196), which seems to qualify God as a protagonist. In the same letter Waugh also remarked that Ryder "was a bad painter." Here is a directly negative opinion of Ryder to add to the many which occur explicitly and implicitly in the novel and which are to form the basis of my argument about him.

Ryder is, nonetheless, the narrator of *Brideshead Revisited*. In summary, the story he tells is a flashback account of his relationship with the members of the Flyte family, whose home is the great Brideshead Castle. Ryder meets the younger Flyte son, Sebastian, whilst both are students at Oxford. Their friendship introduces Ryder to a Roman Catholic world, a world that he joins, according to the "Epilogue," which is set in the present of the early 1940's. A "Prologue" precedes the "Epilogue" in time by a few moments. Through Sebastian, Ryder comes to know Julia Flyte, Sebastian's elder sister, with whom he falls in love, and later lives in sin. He also meets her younger sister, Cordelia, their brother, Brideshead (Bridey), and their parents, the devoutly Catholic Teresa Marchmain and the absent and self-exiled apostate Lord Marchmain. Ryder's friendship with Sebastian endures for some time, though the latter is sent down from Oxford, never to return. Sebastian goes on a disastrous tour of the Levant with his keeper, a Mr. Samgrass, becomes a helpless drunkard, and eventually ends up deathly ill in a monastery hospital in Fez. It is at this stage that Ryder, having settled Sebastian's financial affairs, leaves him, thinking to himself there is "nothing more I could do for Sebastian" (BR, 249). Ryder himself becomes an architectural

painter of some fame and marries Celia, the sister of an oafish acquaintance at Oxford, 'Boy' Mulcaster.[3] He divorces her in the hope of marrying Julia, who finally refuses him because of her return to the Catholic Church. She left the Church in order to marry Rex Mottram, as oafish as Mulcaster, but richer and very influential politically. Mottram attempts to become a Catholic in order to marry Julia in the Church. The surprise fact that he is divorced but that his wife still lives means for the Catholic Flytes that he is still married. Julia marries him anyway, in the Savoy Chapel. Bridey, Cordelia and Lady Marchmain remain steadfastly in the Church. Sebastian, Julia, and, on his deathbed, Lord Marchmain all come back to the faith they had abandoned. Emotion at the re-conversion of Lord Marchmain apparently causes Ryder to become a Catholic.

These are the bare bones of the novel. Even this brief account reveals that Catholicism occurs and recurs as Ryder's story unfolds. Most critics concur that *Brideshead Revisited* is a Catholic novel, even if they assess it negatively, as did Edmund Wilson. He called it "mere romantic fantasy" and "a Catholic tract."[4] James Carens describes it as a novel "in which his Roman Catholicism is pervasive."[5] Only David Lodge misses the religious point entirely by deciding that "in this novel Waugh's myth of decline has become damagingly fixed and limited to a particular phase and a partial view of modern social history."[6] Joseph Hynes' view is more thought-provoking, particularly in the context of this thesis. He remarks that:

> we operate on one chronologically arranged scheme while God operates on an unchangeable and untimed one. This proposition evokes the swamp of God's foreknowledge and our freedom, of course. While I do not think it fruitful to get mired in that one, I still want to emphasize that our appreciation of these two novels requires our supposing, imagining, the coexistence of eternity and time, of changelessness and change, of what is willed for us and what we choose from moment to moment. We have to entertain the idea that God's straight writing cannot be altered, even as we also note that the "crooked

> lines" describe our own choosing to go where the straight lines dictate that we must eventually go....
>
> I did not know, as a reader of Waugh's fiction - at least until the *Sword of Honour* trilogy concluded in 1961 - how Waugh saw the scales balanced as between his social and his religious values; and I strongly suspect that he did not know either. For this reason I find it impossible to evaluate Ryder's eventual conversion with any sense of comfortable certainty. Conversion to what, exactly?[7]

Waugh's critics usually discuss his Catholicism only in broad terms; the whole Catholic faith is taken to be his province, and details of the faith are given scant attention. However, although the apparent but neglected theological possibilities are only parts of the whole, they are extremely important.

Waugh stated very firmly that theology is very present in *Brideshead Revisited*. In May, 1944, he wrote to his agent, A.D. Peters: "Yes, Lady Marchmain is an enigma. I hoped the last conversation with Cordelia gave the theological clue. The whole thing is steeped in theology but I begin to agree that theologians wont [sic] recognise it" (L, 185). Neither a theologian nor a literary critic appears to have attempted, to any great extent, to explore and explain Waugh's novel to discover exactly what "steeped in theology" might mean. This is not entirely surprising, for theology is a vast discipline--"the study or science which treats of God, His nature and attributes and His relations with the universe; the science of things divine (Hooker); divinity."[8] Waugh, of course, was a remarkably well-informed layman. The conversation he alluded to takes place between Lord Marchmain and Cordelia, as he lies dying in the Queen's bed in the Chinese drawing room at Brideshead:

> 'Cordelia, what became of the chapel?'
>
> 'They locked it up, papa, when mummy died.'
>
> 'It was hers, I gave it to her. We've always been builders in our family. I built it for her; in the shade of the pavilion; rebuilt with the old stones behind the old walls; it was the last of the new house to come, the first to go. There used to be a chaplain until the war. Do you remember him?'
>
> 'I was too young.'

> 'Then I went away - left her in the chapel praying. It was hers. It was a place for her. I never came back to disturb her prayers. They said we were fighting for freedom; I had my own victory. Was it a crime?'
>
> 'I think it was, papa.'
>
> 'Crying to heaven for vengeance? Is that why they've locked me in this cave, do you think, with a black tube of air and the little yellow men along the walls, who live without breathing? Do you think that, child? But the wind will come soon, tomorrow perhaps, and we'll breathe again. The ill wind that will blow me good. Better tomorrow.' (BR, 380)[9]

To return to Ryder; Waugh confirms that he is the narrator of *Brideshead Revisited*, telling the story of the Flytes of Brideshead Castle, but he stresses "he is telling the story and it is not his story" (L, 196). Nancy Mitford describes Ryder as lacking in glamour and "a tiny bit dim" (L, 196). Waugh, in his letter of reply, agreed that he was indeed "dim," without the modification of "a tiny bit" (L, 196). Bernard Bergonzi sees him as having a "sadly limited consciousness" and being "weak, sentimental and snobbish."[10] As the narrator, Ryder is the principal observer of events and people. Mostly they are presented through his eyes and mind. Occasionally the observations of others are reported. Ryder also reveals scraps of information about himself, consciously. Inadvertently, in commenting on others, he tells a good deal about himself. The character that emerges is unattractive, except possibly physically, but Waugh seldom deals obviously with any of Ryder's physical features. He does not appear to have much wit, and he is neither kind nor generous, except in ways which seem self-interested and so undermine the kindness and generosity. He is a man with a small talent for architectural painting; he "immortalises" old houses just before their destruction. Yet somehow he breaks into, but hardly belongs to, the Flytes' Catholic world: the Flytes who will experience, according to Waugh's second Preface, "the operation of divine grace on a group of diverse but closely connected characters" (BR, 9).

Waugh clearly and crucially depicts Ryder as an outsider, an interloper, and several critics see his failure to belong. This presentation and critical understanding of his character must be examined before the Flytes, undoubtedly insiders, true group members, are considered. Ryder's father is described by his son, and much critical opinion, as an unloving and unlovable person. Ryder thinks him malicious; Christopher Sykes suggests he is based on Arthur Waugh, Evelyn's father, "if he had been selfish, without affection and markedly unpleasant" (S, 343). Thomas Churchill finds him "eccentric, irascible, and contradictory."[11] And yet if one examines the events and conversations described by Ryder, beneath these undoubtedly bad qualities, does one not discern, not a natural monster, but a man made monstrous and slightly mad by grief at the loss of his wife? This grief is in no way diminished by the practical attentions of a merely dutiful sister, and the total inattention of a self-absorbed son. Early in his narrative of the past Ryder complains that, on going up to Oxford, he expected guidance from his father "who offered me none" (BR, 33). However, three lines later Ryder describes a conversation between his father and the Warden of the college Charles is about to enter. Ned Ryder says:

> I asked what your allowance should be. [The Warden] said, 'Three hundred a year; on no account give him more; that's all most men have.' I thought that a deplorable answer. *I* had more than most men when *I* was up, and my recollection is that nowhere else in the world and at no other time, do a few hundred pounds, one way or the other, make so much difference to one's importance and popularity. (BR, 33)

He continues by saying that he had toyed with the idea of giving Ryder six hundred pounds but, ironically suggesting that this might seem impolite to the Warden, he had compromised with five hundred and fifty pounds (BR, 34). Admittedly the wit is elephantine, but the offer seems generous, personally and financially. And though the guidance is not overt, Ryder's father surely suggests fairly plainly that money, and the way it is used, affect one's life in a

variety of ways. Advice can be extracted from Mr. Ryder's anecdote. Ryder does not do so; he takes the money and continues to carp. Ryder *père's* supposed malice does not prevent him from giving his son the price of a house as a wedding present, and Ryder accepts it (BR, 265). Charles Ryder is better served by his father than his father is by his son.

When Sebastian Flyte takes his friend to Brideshead for the first time he ends by accusing Ryder of behaving like a tourist, of "wanting to do sightseeing" (BR, 48). This would not of itself be entirely condemnatory, but later Ryder uses almost identical terms to condemn the loathed Mr. Samgrass, describing him as "a Victorian tourist, solid and patronizing" (BR, 129). Ryder fails to make the connection himself, but it does seem that there are elements of unattractive similarity in the dealings of Samgrass and Ryder with the Flytes. Samgrass will do anything for Lady Marchmain's favour and money. In the same spirit Ryder gives Sebastian money and seeks his favour. Equally unattractive and accidentally revealing of its narrator is Ryder's mildly sneering account of a holiday in Ravenna with a pre-Sebastian university companion, Collins, who "made notes for a little thesis pointing out the inferiority of the original mosaics to their photographs" (BR, 55). Later Collins dedicates part of the unfinished work, "...to Charles Ryder, with the aid of whose all-seeing eyes I first saw the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia and San Vitale..." (BR, 55). Collins' thesis is patently ridiculous; his work remains unfinished; and yet he gives honest, grateful credit to Ryder, whose "all-seeing eyes" have blindly misled him (Collins).

Alone with Sebastian at Brideshead, Ryder, to whom Sebastian always listens when he says something dangerous, answers the question, "Ought we to be drunk *every* night?" with, "Yes, I think so" (BR, 100). It may be only bravado, but obviously Ryder is incapable of seeing the possible consequences of such a remark. He is not revealing innocence by it, but

culpable ignorance. Later, at the Easter party, it is obvious that Sebastian has become a drunkard. "During the party there was always a grog tray in the library, and Sebastian took to slipping in there at odd moments during the day" (BR, 150). How different from Cordelia, Lady Marchmain, and Bridey, who like "popping in" (BR, 108) to the chapel. Having encouraged Sebastian to drink, Ryder alternately gives him money to buy alcohol and withholds the precious liquid cruelly. At the Christmas party after Sebastian goes down from Oxford, Ryder gives Sebastian two pounds before the latter goes hunting, knowing full well how they will be spent. The next morning Sebastian realises that Ryder is "no help" (BR, 194) to him, and Ryder decides to leave. Polite but otherwise entirely without virtue, Ryder says his goodbyes to Lady Marchmain, who tells him he is "callously wicked" (BR, 194) and "wantonly cruel." He is "unmoved; there was no part of me remotely touched by her distress" (BR, 195). Politeness, incidentally, is merely a social virtue, not one of the cardinal virtues. With these events Ryder begins to leave Sebastian's life. He sees him again briefly, in Fez where Sebastian is dying, but, as Cordelia will tell, Sebastian is safe. He has rediscovered God. It becomes obvious that Sebastian is a virtuous figure, one who can turn aside Ryder's malice and wickedness. But Ryder can still torture Sebastian physically, and does so, by withholding the brandy he craves and which can do him no more harm (BR, 246). Cordelia earlier disgraced herself for Sebastian. She "*sneaked Wilcox's keys and got whisky for Sebastian and got caught. He did seem to want it so*" (BR, 196). Her disgrace is transitory, for she acted out of charity, performing an act almost identical to a later one of Guy Crouchback's in *Sword of Honour*.

After their initial drinking bouts, Ryder and Sebastian return to Oxford. Life for them is much changed. Gone are the large parties, the days filled with pleasure. "We kept

very much to our own company that term, each so much bound up in the other that we did not look elsewhere for friends.... Most of my friends were those I had made through Sebastian; together we shed them and made no others" (BR, 125). Somehow Ryder's entry into Sebastian's life is beginning to erode that life. Without Ryder, Sebastian had friends, perhaps not very good, nor yet good for him, but seemingly not too harmful.

Waugh drops another small but revealing "anti-Ryder" clue into the text: among Ryder's possessions in his rooms at Oxford are "a Lalique decanter and glasses" (BR, 53). According to Eric Newby, in *The World of Evelyn Waugh*, Waugh "intensely disliked Lalique glass" (EWHW, 82). To add to the negative qualities of Lalique, hopeless, suicidal Simon Balcairn, in *Vile Bodies*, has "a flat...like *Chez Espinosa* - all oilcloth and Lalique glass" (VB, 104). Far more damagingly, in *A Handful of Dust*, the dubious princess, Jenny Abdul Akbar has "a set of Lalique bottles and powder boxes" (HD, 114) on her dressing table.

Waugh scatters his text with broad hints, some virtually open statements, that Ryder is not one of his heroes. Two clubs, Bellamy's and Bratt's, appear and reappear in several of Waugh's novels. "Good" characters like Guy Crouchback, Gilbert Pinfold and Peregrine Crouchback belong to Bellamy's. "Bad" or "irresponsible" characters belong to Bratt's. John Beaver, Peter Pastmaster, Basil Seal, Tony Last, Jock Grant-Menzies and Rex Mottram all belong to Bratt's. So does Charles Ryder. He becomes a member in 1926 as he enrols for duties as a strike-breaker during the General Strike.

> 'Only one thing to join - Bill Meadow's show - Defence Corps. All good chaps. Being fixed at Bratt's.'
> 'I'll join.'
> 'You remember Bratt's?'
> 'No. I'll join that too.'
> 'That's right. All good chaps like the dead chaps.'
> So I joined Bill Meadow's show, which was a flying squad, protecting food deliveries in the poorest parts of London. First I was enrolled in the

> Defence Corps, took an oath of loyalty, and was given a helmet and a truncheon; then I was put up for Bratt's Club and, with a number of other recruits, elected at a committee meeting especially for the occasion. For a week we sat under orders in Bratt's and thrice a day we drove out in a lorry at the head of a convoy of milk vans. (BR, 237)

Surely such a membership does not add to the grace and virtue of Charles Ryder.

His language when he has become a Catholic also betrays him. As was noted earlier, in the discussion of *Put Out More Flags*, it is usually the bad or stupid characters who take the name of the Lord in vain. Ryder does this in the sections of the novel where one knows, in the end, that he has been converted. In the "Prologue," he is exasperated by an exchange with Hooper. His order to Hooper "Well, go and inspect the lines now," calls forth a "Rightyoh." Ryder's next words are "And for Christ's sake don't say "Rightyoh" (BR, 19). In the "Epilogue" Ryder uses the same phrase. Hooper remarks "I was just wondering where we could scrounge some tea." Ryder's response: "For Christ's sake...they've only just begun to work" (BR, 391). All in all, this is not a portrait of an attractive, likeable or appealing character. Small wonder that, without Sebastian, Ryder was essentially friendless. His companions were chosen for their usefulness--someone to travel with, to share rooms with--not for the sake of friendship. Temporarily, Ryder reduces Sebastian to his state.

Initially it seems hard to understand why a man with so little to offer should be taken up by Sebastian. It may, however, be an unconscious act of charity on Sebastian's part, one which has both good and evil consequences. Eventually, after many false moves, it leads to Sebastian's salvation. On a larger scale, it introduces into the Brideshead world a wholly destructive, entirely foreign element.

Sanctity and foolishness play their parts in *Brideshead Revisited*. Waugh wrote to Nancy Mitford, who had asked him if he was on Lady Marchmain's side, "Lady Marchmain,

no. I am not on her side; but God is, who suffers fools gladly" (L, 196). Ryder's many failings do not include foolishness in any ordinary or obvious way. He plays the games, profits in a number of ways, all the time despising both games and players and feeling superior. He is dishonest in a way that Rex Mottram, who is a plain fool, protected by both cultural and spiritual invincible ignorance, is not. Lady Marchmain at first welcomed Ryder and suffered Mottram. Perhaps Sebastian saw Ryder's state and, with the charity of the "fool for God's sake" alluded to by St. Paul (1 Cor. iv.10), set out to rescue him. This may be stretching the bounds of credulity, but no more than does the simple explanation that a delightful Ryder seduces the whole Flyte family. Whilst it is clear how and why Ryder is drawn to Sebastian and his house and family, the attraction Ryder has for Sebastian is inscrutable. Possibly Sebastian falls in love physically and emotionally--the attraction of opposites. Perhaps it is that Ryder is naturally completely outside Sebastian's world, a world Sebastian himself has begun for the moment to find oppressive.

Waugh offers no clear reasons, but surely he drops hints. It does not seem unreasonable that, in welcoming Ryder, Sebastian is making an unsuccessful and possibly unconscious attempt to take care of someone, something he later says he wanted to do. He found the derelict Kurt in Morocco, a hopeless, helpless, unmalicious fool who really needed him. "'You know, Charles,' he said, 'it's rather a pleasant change when all your life you've had people looking after you, to have someone to look after yourself. Only of course it has to be someone pretty hopeless to need looking after by *me*'" (BR, 247). Finding Kurt enables Sebastian to realise the holiness that Cordelia and the superior of the monastery in Morocco recognise in him, but which Ryder will never see (BR, 349). Later Cordelia describes how Sebastian's life will probably stagger to an end:

> He'll develop little eccentricities of devotion, intense personal cults of his own: he'll be found in the chapel at odd times and missed when he's expected. Then, one morning after one of his drinking bouts he'll be picked up at the gate dying, and show by a mere flicker of the eyelid that he is conscious when they give him the last sacraments. It's not such a bad way of getting through one's life. (BR, 352)

Such a way of living, and the help he gives Kurt, together with his obvious lack of intellectual pretensions, put Sebastian in the tradition of St. Benedict Labre and the fool-saints of the eastern Christian. Benedict Labre was an eighteenth-century mendicant, the son of a rich family. His poor health and unstable personality caused the superiors of the monasteries he tried to enter to reject him. Following his rejections he wandered about southwestern Europe, living in squalor, sharing what he was given, seldom complaining and finally, because of ruined health, taking shelter in a home for the destitute. Ordinary people readily recognised the holiness that the 'established' churchmen originally missed.[12]

Sebastian's name too is worth examining. The image that this name brings immediately to mind is of a beautiful youth wounded by many arrows. St. Sebastian did not die as a result of his arrow wounds, but was nursed back to health, only to be martyred, finally, by being battered to death.[13] One might see Sebastian's psychological and spiritual wounds, prior to going to North Africa, as barbs deliberately aimed by Ryder, Samgrass and Monsignor Bell, and his sufferings there as his final martyrdom. It is even possible that St. Sebastian's remarkable recovery from his first almost fatal injuries and his subsequent martyr's death are an echo of Christ's death and resurrection. If so, Sebastian becomes a Christ-figure.

Waugh may not have been whimsical when he had Sebastian carry a teddy bear, symbol of childhood and innocence, called Aloysius. Shortly after meeting Ryder, Sebastian abandoned his bear. The bear was named after St. Aloysius, a saint who as a youth "was

revolted by the violence and licentiousness of noble society."[14] This is the kind of society that Ryder lusts after and, temporarily, his influence corrupts Sebastian. More fatefully Sebastian allows him into Brideshead, to work his corruption more fully. At first Aloysius the bear seems to protect Sebastian and in the first quarter of the novel he appears, or is spoken of at some length, twelve times. Aloysius makes his final appearance on page 124 of the 395-page Penguin (1981) edition:

> All that term and all that year Sebastian and I lived more and more in the shadows and, like a fetish, hidden first from the missionary and at length forgotten, the toy bear, Aloysius, sat unregarded on the chest-of-drawers in Sebastian's bedroom.

Sebastian's other "guardian," Samgrass, makes his first appearance on page 123, and may be said to take over Aloysius' duties. However, it is with the advent of Mr. Samgrass that Sebastian, already set on a slippery and lonely slope by Ryder, begins to go downhill more rapidly. Both Ryder and Samgrass are aliens in Flyte/Brideshead society, and in spite of Ryder's apparent dislike of Samgrass they appear to belong together, having characteristics in common. Waugh actually connects them physically at one point. Just after Ryder has given the hunt-bound Sebastian money, Samgrass appears. "Then, as though it were his cue on the stage, Mr Samgrass came to my elbow, put an arm in mine, and led me back to the fire. He warmed his neat little hands and then turned to warm his seat" (BR, 185). Is it not a devilish habit, to warm the backside, the tail?

If Sebastian loses his childish innocence in Ryder's company, giving up his "large teddy bear" (BR, 37), and no longer "driving a hansom cab and dining at the George in false whiskers" (BR, 38), he ages and grows ill in Samgrass's care. "Sebastian certainly did look ill; five months had wrought the change of years in him" (BR, 176).

To add to Mr. Samgrass's malign qualities one needs only to know that after being dismissed from Brideshead he went to work for the newspaper the *Daily Beast*, and is discovered by Celia Ryder to have what appear to be almost supernatural powers. He "seemed to know us very well...he seemed to know more about you than I do" (BR, 303). The question of the meaning of Samgrass's name is problematic. No such word appears in any of a number of English dictionaries. A letter from Cordelia (who may well speak for Waugh) provides a clue. "Mr. Samgrass...is a bit in disgrace..." (BR, 196). So is Charles, for his behaviour in giving Sebastian money, and so is Cordelia. However, Cordelia's disgrace comes from real kindness and generosity of spirit. Ryder and Samgrass are singularly lacking in these qualities. Once again Waugh connects them in their attributes. It seems possible, then, that Mr. Samgrass's name is Sans-Grâce--a graceless person on whom the "divine grace" of Waugh's second Preface (BR, 9) cannot work. Samgrass seems devilish. As he and Ryder stand before the fire he links arms with Ryder who must, surely, be a little tainted by the touch, especially as Ryder is already obviously no good angel.

The family members of the Brideshead group on whom God's grace does work represent various possibilities of faith within the Catholic Church. Besides the ultimately saintly Sebastian there is his mother, Lady Marchmain who "embodies the spiritual rigour demanded by a traditional Catholic Faith."[15] There is Julia, a perpetually falling from grace, perpetually repentant figure, who will always be twitched back to God by the thread. How important her name is, is difficult to tell, but St. Juliana Falconieri, like Julia, refused marriage.[16] The saint and Julia both end their lives doing charitable works. In Julia's case she takes in the homeless, possessionless Father Membling. There is Lord Marchmain, historically and personally apostate, who is still given God's grace. There is Bridey, dull,

unimaginative, but absolutely honest in the narrow faith he conceives and is allowed. Brideshead wanted to be a monk, but lacked the vocation. His nickname, Bridey, may be a joking reference to women religious--"brides of Christ." And there is Cordelia, a would-be nun who also lacks a vocation, but who understands her faith and many of its possibilities, and who settles with good grace for a life of good works. Cordelia's name means "warm-hearted." Conceivably, she represents the Sacred Heart. This symbol of Christ's love for mankind resulted from visions experienced by St. Margaret Mary Alacoque between 1673 and 1675, which gave formal shape to and made popular a devotion which can be traced back to the Middle Ages.[17] She is described as a "rather humourless nun."[18] Cordelia began her life as a fun-filled child, but the world did not allow her comedy to survive. Cordelia herself tells Ryder his opinion of her: "...did you think, 'Poor Cordelia, such an engaging child, grown up a plain and pious spinster, full of good works'?" (BR, 353). Ryder agrees that he did. Fortunately Cordelia retains a characteristic of her mother's, a "gentle, infinitesimal spirit of mockery" (BR, 353).

Brideshead Castle, to some degree, represents the House and City of God, and its inhabitants are diverse members of the faith it embodies. Until Ryder enters the group it coheres. Lord Marchmain may be absent physically; he may have abandoned the faith, but he is never completely absent from the minds of the inhabitants. His physical return is not beyond the bounds of possibility, neither is his spiritual return to the faith which never abandoned him. The rest of the family is tightly linked in ways beyond Ryder's comprehension. Joyfully, rigorously, reluctantly, foolishly, they are all inextricably part of the family, members of the household, hence part of the Church. Such diversity does not make for comfort, but Waugh does not present Catholicism as comfortable.

Ryder appears and things truly begin to fall apart. No one actually loses faith, but the coherence, the continuity so valued by Waugh, are gone. Ryder fails Sebastian, first by being unhelpable and by using Sebastian, then by manipulating him. Sebastian is driven away, and, though he rediscovers his faith, he cannot really help to perpetuate *the* faith. Lord and Lady Marchmain die. Julia sins by marrying Mottram, loses a child, divorces Mottram, and refuses to sin again by marrying Ryder. Another unfruitful end. Cordelia's life is altered radically, if at second hand, by Ryder's intrusion. He does not damage her directly, as he does Sebastian and Julia, but she suffers for the loss of her brother, until she discovers that he is both safe and saved, and she shares Julia's pain. Whatever the reason, she becomes, in effect, a secular nun. Bridey marries a woman too old to bear his children. Practically, there will be no more Marchmains. Symbolically, the faith will not be propagated. Only Ryder remains to end the tale.

Discussion of the family members leads to an examination of Waugh's two prefaces to *Brideshead Revisited*. The first, written for the original publication in 1945, and the second, for a 1960 revision, are somewhat different in content. The first one refers very precisely to the workings of "Divine purpose" on an equally specific group of people, during a clearly defined time period.

> There are passages of buffoonery, but the general theme is at once romantic and eschatological. It is ambitious, perhaps intolerably presumptuous; nothing less than an attempt to trace the workings of Divine purpose in a pagan world, in the lives of an English Catholic family, half-paganized themselves, in the world of 1923-1939.

Waugh goes on to stress again that *Brideshead Revisited* is not, except on occasion, a comedy:

> The story will be uncongenial alike to those who look back on that pagan world with unalloyed affection, and to those who see it as transitory,

> insignificant, and already, hopefully passed. Whom, then, can I hope to please? Perhaps those who...look to the future with black foreboding and need more solid comfort than rosy memories. For the latter I have given my hero, and then, if they will allow me, a hope, not indeed that anything but disaster lies ahead, but that the human spirit, redeemed, can survive all disasters.

Sebastian, not Ryder, must surely be this hero. This is not simply because I have pulled Ryder's ignoble qualities out of the text, but because he does not belong, according to Waugh's description of the "family," and because of the historical period Waugh so carefully notes. Besides, it is reasonable to assume that his conversion took place after 1939; all versions of the "Prologue" and the "Epilogue" are set in the same period, a year or two after 1940. It is in the "Epilogue" that Ryder's conversion comes to light.

The corresponding statement in the 1960 Preface is not so clear. *Brideshead Revisited's* "theme - the operation of divine grace on a group of diverse but closely connected characters - was presumptuously large, but I make no apology for it" (BR, 9). Although the textual changes from the edition of 1945 to that of 1960 are relatively minor, Waugh has become almost evasive as far as his prefatory account of the novel's theme is concerned.

Neither Preface suggests indubitably, indeed does not suggest at all, that Ryder is heroic. Indeed, Waugh always seems to portray Ryder negatively. As an artist he is a failure and empty, parasitic: "My drawings were worthless...elaborate little pastiches" (BR, 125). Later, after a successfully contrived exhibition, Anthony Blanche tells Ryder in no uncertain terms that his talent has, if anything, degenerated: "Where, my dear Charles, did you find this sumptuous greenery? The corner of a hothouse at T-t-rent or T-t-tring? What gorgeous usurer nurtured these fronds for your pleasure?... My dear, let us not expose your little imposture before these good, plain people" (BR, 308). Blanche's suggestion about the goodness and plainness is mocking; the judgement of Charles and his painting is deadly

serious. Christopher Sykes says, with reason, that "Anthony Blanche is shown as a man of authentic culture and intellect." According to Sykes, Blanche was a composite picture of Brian Howard and Harold Acton, much modified by invention. As Sykes demonstrates, the clever mind and sophisticated background owe much to Acton, the outrageous way of speaking and behaving to Howard (S, 346). Blanche offers Ryder perceptive comments not only about art, but about the Flytes, particularly Sebastian. Although Blanche does not understand Sebastian fully, he understands his secular nature, as Cordelia understands both that and his religious being. Blanche is the only character in *Brideshead Revisited* who seems wholly at ease and in tune with himself, though not in a complacent fashion. As he recounts to Ryder the true story of his own ducking in Mercury, the stupidity of his bragging unsuccessful tormentors is revealed. Blanche stepped into the fountain of his own accord. He cannot be bullied, and he preserves his dignity whilst the would-be molesters lose theirs. Also, except when he puts on a deliberate, controlled public performance, he seems to be a man of temperate, if precious, habits, unlike his mindlessly, ritualistically intemperate fellow-students. Prior to the Mercury incident he had consumed a dinner consisting of an omelette, a peach and Vichy water. Blanche is probably the only major character in *Brideshead Revisited* who remains whole and who is not damaged by contact with Ryder. He is a man of unorthodox integrity, and one whose opinions should be valued.

So Ryder, the man into whose mouth the story of Brideshead and the Flytes is placed, is lacking in perception, lacking in talent, lacking in judgement, self-interested, but without any real interest in anything else--a taker. He is a man who is as inadequate a dabbler in friendship as he is in art. This unworthy little man, who never realises his unworthiness, is worked into the fabric of Sebastian's life, into Brideshead, and he speeds the process of

corruption and decay. It is too much to say that he is solely responsible for the corruption, but he does have, in his small-mindedness, his inability to understand anything except in mean-spirited personal terms, an enormous power to do harm. He is a catalyst in the proper sense, for he is fundamentally unchanged by the events around him, though he precipitates them. The Charles Ryder of the "Prologue" and "Epilogue" is really no different from the Ryder of the central story. He thinks he is. Waugh, I believe, does not. Ryder's focus may have changed, but his nature has not. At the beginning he took from his father and gave nothing; at the end he takes from what he thinks is Mother Church, and gives nothing. This is why it seems plausible, if not provable, to consider his name meaningful--as names so often are for Waugh--and that Ryder may be interpreted as rider: the rider of the pale horse of the Apocalypse.

> ...and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat upon him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with the sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.
>
> And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held. (Rev. vi.8-9)

Many disasters had befallen the Flyte family and the Catholic family from which Lady Marchmain came. Brideshead itself had been dismantled and rebuilt, symbolising the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. But only after Ryder enters the house and the lives of its inhabitants does the real collapse begin. If this interpretation is credible, then the fact that Samgrass works for the *Daily Beast* (BR, 303) connects him yet again with Ryder and seems likely to be the key to the "eschatological" theme to which Waugh drew attention in his first Preface, the eschatology of Revelations.

Houses, old and splendid, or at least fairly old and fairly splendid, and their decay, had long been of great importance for Waugh. King's Thursday in *Decline and Fall* had been destroyed entirely, Hetton Abbey in *A Handful of Dust* had been disastrously remodelled, and Boot Magna Hall in *Scoop* is threatened. But these are houses in and of the world. In describing their decline and fall Waugh chronicles and deplores a temporal disaster, the collapse of a society--as represented by the houses--that he regrets but whose destruction is hardly the end of the world. Marchmain House and Brideshead Castle represent something much bigger. They and their inhabitants are the House and City of God as Frank Kermode has suggested very persuasively in "Mr. Waugh's Cities."[19] For Waugh this would mean not merely the Catholic House and City of God, but the *only* ones. Yet again, for Waugh Christianity means Catholicism. Without the Church and God there is nothing. Marchmain House is destroyed entirely. Charles feels his ability to paint suddenly grow as he records its rooms prior to its virtual destruction when it becomes bourgeois service flats (BR, 250-51). It is almost as though his capacity to paint depended for its existence on sucking the life from the house. He becomes parasitic, destroying his host! On the day the paintings are almost completed, for the first time the opening words of the Lamentations of Jeremiah are spoken: "Quomodo sedet sola civitas (plena populo)" (BR, 253). Waugh is beginning the lament for the destruction of the House and City of God, and implying, if not naming, the destroyer. What Ryder is able to preserve by his painting is only a pallid representation of the real thing.

In the course of the novel Jeremiah's phrase--which translates "How doth the city sit solitary, (*that was* full of people!)" (Lam. i.1)--is repeated twice more: once when Ryder is returning to England, just after he has learned that Julia is on the same ship (BR, 271), and finally in the closing lines of the "Epilogue," just after Ryder has revealed his conversion to

Catholicism (BR, 394-95). Meeting Julia again brings Ryder back into the Brideshead circle. The bloodsucker re-enters the house. On the ship Ryder has sexual relations with Julia in an episode that Waugh clearly means to suggest not only possession of Julia, but possession of the house she provides access to, which in its turn represents something much larger: "It was as though a deed of conveyance of her narrow loins had been drawn and sealed. I was making my first entry as the freeholder of a property I would enjoy and develop at leisure" (BR, 297). His fatal hold on Brideshead and all that it stands for tightens. Again there is reason to be reminded of the need for lamentation. On their final appearance in the "Epilogue" the words of lamentation follow directly on Ryder's hint that he has become a member of the Catholic Church, "I said a prayer, an ancient newly-learned form of words" (BR, 394).

Ryder's conversion to Catholicism resulted, apparently, from Lord Marchmain's dramatic re-entry into the Catholic Church on his deathbed. Marchmain's final act is an acknowledgement of his faith by making the sign of the Cross. This drama causes the kneeling Ryder to "believe." It seems that Ryder did not enter the Church thoughtfully, reasonably, but was seduced into it by the glamour and theatrical power of the deathbed scene. Such a conversion must have been repugnant to Waugh, who "had convinced himself very unsentimentally--with only intellectual passion, of the truth of the Catholic faith, and that it must save his soul. Hence in his instructions or talks he always wanted to know exactly the meaning and content of the Catholic faith..." (S, 156). When Waugh was received into the Catholic Church his "godparent was the charwoman on duty.... He asked none of his friends...to witness this solemn moment in his life with one exception...Tom Driberg...a fervent Anglican" (S, 156). Waugh's approach to Catholicism was markedly unspectacular,

even modest. Ryder's acknowledgement of his conversion is made in such a way as to reveal it as shallow and vainglorious. There does not, however, seem to be any doubt that Ryder was converted, even if, as Hynes remarked, the precise nature of his conversion was inscrutable. And this thesis does cast doubt on the virtue of his conversion. John W. Osborne sees the conversion as less than obvious though.

> That Charles Ryder was converted to the Roman Catholic church at the end of *Brideshead Revisited* is accepted by all Waugh scholars, even though that fact often eludes hasty or careless readers of the novel. The last few paragraphs of the book seem to admit no other explanation of Ryder's visiting the chapel at Brideshead Castle and subsequent reflections on the "the fierce little human tragedy in which I played."[20]

In a still-continuing debate with Osborne, Donald Greene expresses astonishment that Ryder was a convert to Catholicism.

> "That Charles Ryder was converted to the Roman Catholic Church at the end of *Brideshead Revisited* is accepted by all Waugh scholars," John W. Osborne begins his "Hints of Charles Ryder's Conversion in *Brideshead Revisited*." I suppose that makes me not a Waugh scholar; though I think I can honestly affirm that I am not a hasty or careless reader of the work. Another Waugh scholar tells me that Ryder's conversion is "one of the most widely accepted points in the book." I was astonished when I was told this. I long ago lost count of the number of times I have read the novel since it was first published more than forty years ago, but never once in those readings did this interpretation occur to me.[21]

On several occasions Waugh suggests that Ryder sees himself, profanely, as a Christ-figure. It should be remembered that *Brideshead's* subtitle is *The Sacred and Profane Memories of Captain Charles Ryder*. It seems that his recollections of the Flyte family are the "sacred," his own memories and context are "profane." The following passage, especially taken together with later scenes, may be an intimation that Ryder believes that he, like Christ before His Crucifixion, has been scourged:

> The moon was full and high. We walked round the house; under the limes Julia paused and idly snapped off one of the long shoots, last year's

growth, that fringed their boles, and stripped it as she walked, making a switch, as children do, but with petulant movements that were not a child's, snatching nervously at the leaves and crumbling them between her fingers; she began peeling the bark, scratching it with her nails.

Once more we stood by the fountain.

'It's like the setting of a comedy,' I said. 'Scene: a Baroque fountain in a nobleman's grounds. Act one, sunset; act two, dusk; act three, moonlight. The characters keep assembling at the fountain for no very clear reason.'

'Comedy?'

'Drama. Tragedy. Farce. What you will. This is the reconciliation scene.'

'Was there a quarrel?'

'Estrangement and misunderstanding in act two.'

'Oh, don't talk in that damned bounderish way. Why must you see everything second-hand? Why must this be a play? Why must my conscience be a pre-Raphaelite picture?'

'It's a way I have.'

'I hate it.'

Her anger was as unexpected as every change on this evening of swift veering moods. Suddenly she cut me across the face with her switch, a vicious, stinging little blow as hard as she could strike.

'Now do you see how I hate it?'

She hit me again.

'All right,' I said, 'go on.'

Then, though her hand was raised, she stopped and threw the half-peeled wand into the water, where it floated white and black in the moonlight.

'Did that hurt?'

'Yes.' (BR, 332-33)

This follows very closely on these words from Julia to Ryder:

'Mummy dying with it; *Christ dying with it, nailed hand and foot* [my emphasis]; hanging over the bed in the night nursery; hanging year after year in the dark little study at Farm Street with the shining oilcloth; hanging in the dark church where only the old char-woman raises the dust and one candle burns; *hanging at noon, high among the crowds and the soldiers; no comfort except a sponge of vinegar and the kind words of a thief; hanging forever; never the cool sepulchre and the grave clothes spread on the stone slab, never the oil and spices in the dark cave; always the midday sun and the dice clicking for the seamless coat*' [my emphasis]. (BR, 328-29)

Waugh is too scrupulous and inventive a novelist to introduce this fairly extensive passage dealing specifically with the Crucifixion, and then to follow it with Julia beating Charles, without some very good reason. This reading can be taken further, into the "Epilogue."

Ryder visits Nanny Hawkins, who "did not recognize me until I spoke" (BR, 392). This brief quotation reminds one of Mary Magdalene at Christ's sepulchre, which she has just found empty. The self-image of a Christ-like Ryder continues as he visits the chapel.

> I said a prayer, an ancient, newly-learned form of words, and left, turning towards the camp; and as I walked back, and the cook-house bugle sounded ahead of me, I thought:
>
> 'The builders did not know the uses to which their work would descend; they made a new house with the stones of the old castle; year by year, generation after generation, they enriched and extended it; year by year the great harvest of timber in the park grew to ripeness; until, in sudden frost, came the age of Hooper; the place was desolate and the work all brought to nothing; *Quomodo sedet sola civitas*. Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.
>
> 'And yet,' I thought, stepping out more briskly towards the camp, where the bugles after a pause had taken up the second call and were sounding 'Pick-em-up, pick-em-up, hot potatoes,' 'and yet that is not the last word; it is not even an apt word; it is a dead word from ten years back.'
>
> 'Something quite remote from anything the builders intended, has come out of their work, and out of the fierce little human tragedy in which I played; something none of us thought about at the time; a small red flame - a beaten-copper lamp of deplorable design relit before the beaten-copper doors of a tabernacle; the flame which the old knights saw from their tombs, which they saw put out; that flame burns again for other soldiers, far from home, farther, in heart, than Acre or Jerusalem. It could not have been lit but for the builders and the tragedians, and there I found it this morning, burning anew among the old stones' (BR, 394-95).

This portion of the text is crammed with principally Catholic imagery and is complex. Several strands must be separated and examined for the whole to be understood, and to allow me to continue with the point I have begun to make about Ryder's blasphemous and hubristic vision of himself as Christ-like.

At the least complicated level Ryder sees himself as a fortunate follower of the Crusaders, for they lost the hard-won cities of Acre and Jerusalem to the Saracens. They saw

the light of faith and the lights of the tabernacles extinguished in the Holy Land. For Ryder the flames are rekindled.

Ryder may have the sense of history that Hooper lacks, but his knowledge of the history of Brideshead Castle is less than accurate. Ryder points out that the flame "could not have been lit, but for the builders." These builders "made a new house with the stones of the old castle; year by year, generation after generation, they enriched and extended it." Only in the most pragmatic sense did these builders contribute to the lighting of the flame. For they, or more properly the Flyte family, were Protestants. It was only with Lady Marchmain's marriage that the family returned to its long-abandoned Catholicism. There are not generations of Old Catholicism built into the bones of Brideshead, and the chapel itself is as new as the family's Catholicism. It was a wedding present to Teresa from her newly-converted husband. Ryder's view of this small piece of history is not so much romantic as ill-informed. And when he thinks of the flame--"and there I found it this morning...," there is overwhelming pride in this "I." His earlier self-absorption has become self-glorification.

Given Ryder's association with Mr. Samgrass, who went to work for Lord Copper's *Beast*, Waugh's double use of the metal "copper"--"a beaten-copper lamp of deplorable design relit before the beaten-copper doors of a tabernacle"--must be meaningful, as must the adjective "deplorable." Samgrass, Ryder and Lord Copper are variously deplorable, and associated with the apocalyptic Beast. Besides, this is a supposedly solemn if joyful moment for Ryder, his first prayer as a Catholic in Brideshead chapel. It is an unfortunate time to exercise his doubtful aesthetic judgement that Blanche and Waugh found deplorable. Is his Catholicism another "little imposture" like his painting?

After Ryder has spent some time with Nanny Hawkins, just before he visits the chapel, the reader is told, "it was nearly twelve" (BR, 393). Julia has earlier made a point of saying of the dying Christ that he was "hanging there at noon" (BR, 329). In temporal terms it seems unimportant that the reader should be made so precisely aware of the time at which Ryder entered the chapel. In Catholic/Christian terms it becomes very important, for noon (twelve o'clock) is the sixth hour. "And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst" (Luke xxiii.44-45). Just before the end of the Good Friday Office of Tenebrae, the Office of the sixth hour, a church is in total darkness and a loud sound is made. According to Adrian Fortescue, "the M.C. strikes the bench or a book to make a sound; everyone in the choir does so too."[22] This symbolises the rending of the veil of the temple in a darkened world. As Ryder fell to his knees beside Marchmain's deathbed, "a phrase came back to me from my childhood of the veil of the temple being rent from top to bottom" (BR, 385). Ryder does not hear this devastating sound; he hears, twice, the camp bugles announcing the midday meal. Or rather, as Waugh seems to suggest, he hears the trumpets of the final Resurrection. For the tabernacle lamp re-lit symbolises the Lighting of the New Fire, it will, apparently, no longer "always to be Good Friday" (BR, 252) as Cordelia had feared, thanks to Ryder's presence. In a perverse, profane fashion, alone in the chapel, Ryder has banished Good Friday and Christ is risen.

Earlier in the novel Cordelia describes the closing of the chapel at Brideshead, after Lady Marchmain's Requiem Mass, saying that it was "as though from now on it was always to be Good Friday" (BR, 252). In the "Epilogue" a fellow officer describes the re-opening of the chapel to Ryder:

> 'There's a caretaker and a couple of old servants live at the top - they won't be any trouble to you - and a blitzed Roman Catholic padre whom Lady Julia gave a home to - jittery old bird, but no trouble. He's opened the chapel; that's in bounds for the troops; surprising lot use it, too!' (BR, 389)

Nanny Hawkins also tells Ryder about the resident priest: "...only myself here and the two girls and poor Father Membling who was blown up, not a roof to his head nor a stick of furniture till Julia took him in with the kind heart she's got, and his nerves something shocking" (BR, 392).

Both the officer and Nanny Hawkins make references to Father Membling's nervous state. Waugh never chooses his words randomly or carelessly, and their descriptions of Father Membling's health may be a clue suggesting that the priest was not in a position, according to Church law, either to re-open the chapel or to serve Mass. In R. Colin Pickett's *Mental Affliction and Church Law* it is made very plain what priestly sufferers of mental disorders may not do:

> The phrase *infirmitas mentis* allows of a wide interpretation. It includes all psychic disorders which are not of a passing nature. The case may be one, therefore, of complete insanity, of monomania (fixed ideas) or of imbecility resulting from any of several causes, such as accident, illness, shock, grief, or simply old age. Neurasthenia, which renders its victim abnormally irritable or depressed, lessens his intellectuality and saps his will power, may indeed be considered a type of mental infirmity.
>
> It is not at all necessary that the Ordinary before entering upon removal proceedings should be acquainted with the nature of the various types of insanity or with their nomenclature. When he judges that the pastor's particular form of mental infirmity is lasting and that the good of the parish requires his removal, he not only may but must remove him. He must be interested especially in the spiritual welfare of the parishioners and, as Noval remarks, only secondarily in the niceties of psychiatric diagnosis.[23]

This, with the officer's and Nanny Hawkins' hints at neurasthenia, does suggest that Father Membling may be an incompetent priest.

In the "Epilogue," Ryder quotes not only from The Lamentations of Jeremiah, but from Ecclesiastes (i.2), "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Ryder chooses to believe that for him vanity is "a dead word from ten years back." Clearly he thinks he has lost all vanity, all vainness. This is a dangerous state for a Catholic, whose sense of being without vanity may itself be vanity, vainglory again.

Surely, with all these pieces combined, Waugh's implication from the closing lines of *Brideshead Revisited*--"'You're looking unusually cheerful today,' said the second-in-command" (BR, 395), is not that Ryder is a humble, joyful Catholic, revivifying the Catholic Church. Rather it is that he is a self-satisfied fake. He considers himself a Catholic, but the nature of his conversion, for Waugh, is sham, facile, inadequate. He is no more a real Catholic than his paintings were real houses. Both are substitutes. Ryder, the only obvious survivor of the Brideshead débâcle, by embodying a perverted, debased form of pseudo-Catholicism, which he presents to the world as authentic to the point that he feels Christ-like, is destructive to the Church. The true members of Waugh's Church, saved and salvagable, are dead or scattered. Brideshead is overrun. The enemies at the gate, symbolised by the Anglican Church just outside Brideshead's grounds and the largely "C of E" army, have gained power. Though Ryder feels uplifted and hopeful it seems impossible that the house and its inhabitants, the true people and Church, should ever come together again.

An atmosphere of doom often pervades *Brideshead Revisited* most obviously when Ryder is in company with others. Alone he seems happier and at ease. But he is possibly the cause, the centre of a tragedy, a tragedy that was, until recently, enacted in Catholic churches for Good Friday, symbolic of, and a lament for, the Crucifixion. This symbol and lament is the Office of Tenebrae. Waugh refers to this Office five times; Ryder is always present when

this happens. Two of the references are to Tenebrae itself, three are by quotation from one of the essential and most anguished readings during the Office--The Lamentations of Jeremiah. There is also a reference to Good Friday. Cordelia is describing to Ryder the last priestly act in the chapel.

> 'They've closed the chapel at Brideshead, Bridey and the Bishop; mummy's Requiem was the last mass said there. After she was buried the priest came in - I was there alone. I don't think he saw me - and took out the altar stone and put it in his bag; then he burned the wads of wool with the holy oil on them and threw the ash outside; he emptied the holy-water stoop [sic] and blew out the lamp in the sanctuary, and left the tabernacle open and empty, as though from now on it was always to be Good Friday. I suppose none of this makes sense to you, Charles, poor agnostic. I stayed there until he was gone, and then, suddenly, there wasn't any chapel there any more, just an oddly decorated room. I can't tell you what it felt like. You've never been to Tenebrae, I suppose?'
>
> 'Never.'
>
> 'Well, if you had you'd know what the Jews felt about their temple. *Quomodo sedet sola civitas*...it's a beautiful chant. You ought to go once, just to hear it.' (BR, 252-53)

Ryder himself refers unmistakeably to the office, though without naming it: "*Quomodo sedet sola civitas* (for I had heard the great lament, which Cordelia quoted to me in the drawing-room of Marchmain House, sung by a half-caste choir in Guatemala, nearly a year ago)" (BR, 271).

Tenebrae is sung during Holy Week, the last enactment taking place for Good Friday, the bleakest and blackest day in the Catholic year. During Tenebrae fifteen candles on a triangular hearse, representing Christ, eleven apostles, and the three women present at the Crucifixion and entombment, are ritually extinguished, except for the single, central candle representing Christ. This is hidden, but not snuffed, so that it may be revealed at Easter with the ceremony of the Lighting of the New Fire. The candles are severally extinguished on alternate sides of the triangle, beginning with the first candle at the gospel (or north) side of

the triangle, moving then to the second candle on the epistle (or south) base of the triangle, and so on.[24] It may be coincidental, but there are fifteen distinct sections in *Brideshead Revisited*: the "Prologue," the "Epilogue" and thirteen separate chapters in between. The candles for Tenebrae are arranged as an open-ended triangle, and in a sense the structure of *Brideshead Revisited* is similar. The "Prologue," in effect, is the first of the seven candles on the gospel side of the triangle, the "Epilogue" is its equivalent on the epistle side. The apex chapter "Julia and Rex," can be seen as the focal point, if not the climax of the novel. Only at this point are all the elements of the novel in place. In this chapter, to what is known already are added: the last great events of Marchmain House, Julia's ball; Rex's ludicrous and unsuccessful attempt to enter the Catholic Church (a warning of things to come?); Julia's sinful wedding with its unhappy consequences. Also, unusually if not uniquely, Ryder anticipates a future event, his meeting with Julia on board ship, by alluding to it here (BR, 206-30 *passim*). It is almost as though this chapter predicts future doom. It is a chapter in which, in the context of the whole novel, the light of hope for the future goes out; the fifteenth candle is extinguished. In the "Epilogue," a single saving light remains in the re-opened chapel, but only Ryder sees it, and not with the eye of faith, but with the blind eye of wilful self-deception. Or perhaps the light in the lamp is the glow of hell-fire, given Ryder's connection with Samgrass. There is some reasonable doubt as to whether the chapel has been properly reconsecrated.

The novel ends in, is surrounded by, and is filled with war, a suggestion of Armageddon going along with Apocalypse. Ryder's wartime "Prologue" and "Epilogue" frame the story of the Flytes with war. The Spanish Civil War, and earlier the small civil war of the General Strike, attack from within the frame, as Ryder attacks from within.

Where Ryder is, there is death and destruction. There is nothing glorious about the real war that Ryder is involved in, no bravery, no battles for truth and right. His war is the one fought by literal scavengers, in relative safety. Nor is there anything honourable and brave about Ryder. The rider of the pale horse is not dashing and bold and terrifyingly, triumphantly devastating. He corrupts quietly and brings down the House of God with corrosive self-satisfaction. It is no wonder that the one happy section of *Brideshead Revisited* is titled after a tomb inscription, "Et in Arcadia ego." Death and corruption exist in the Arcadia of Oxford, as they do everywhere. Ryder's ornamental skull, inscribed with the superficially contented words, "Et in Arcadia ego" (BR, 53), which he keeps, nestling in a bowl of roses, becomes more than an expression of undergraduate aesthetic excess. It provides an early key to Ryder's destructive role. The skull, after all, is truly his; it was his only Oxford possession paid for in cash, owned outright (BR, 53).

If my theory about *Brideshead Revisited* is given credence it will make the novel Waugh's most intensely Catholic novel--though not a hopeful one--being so in form as well as content. It also links it with the World War II trilogy, reworked as *Sword of Honour*, making a loose tetralogy. This is because in the final scenes of each version of the last novel, *Unconditional Surrender*, Guy Crouchback is married to Domenica Plessington, Domenica being Italian for Sunday. In this case, to be considered more fully in Chapter Six, the name Domenica serves to reinforce the pain and bitterness of Waugh's view of what the Catholic Church had become after the changes made by the Second Vatican Council.

My understanding of Charles Ryder's character does not derive simply from the reading of a single text. Rather, it is based on close study of Waugh's much-altered manuscripts of *Brideshead Revisited*, a typescript, and three printed versions of the novel.

Ryder, originally named Peter Fenwick, a much more banal name, goes through a fairly startling metamorphosis to become the character now commonly available in print. As Waugh refined and corrected *Brideshead* he drew Ryder ever-darker, depriving him systematically of all amiable qualities, making him colder, more calculating, more self-centred with every change. Some account of Waugh's manuscripts as a record of the Fenwick/Ryder transformation is vital here to show Ryder becoming ever more vicious, entirely unheroic.

Unquestionably Evelyn Waugh intended his manuscripts to survive. All were either bound or held in specially made archival boxes. *Brideshead Revisited* is fully-bound in maroon morocco with the Waugh armorial bearings in the centre of the front. The spine has five gilded sewing ridges and between them, in roman capitals, are the title and Waugh's name. Further down the spine MS appears in Gothic capitals and at the base of the spine the date MCMXLIV. The endpapers are blue with strong French joints. The work was done by Zaehnsdorf, one of the two best commercial fine binding companies in London.

So, the two manuscripts, one fragmentary, are safely preserved and readily available to the researcher--readily in that the pages are firmly held together. However, the description of this text in the catalogue at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center indicates some of the difficulties with the manuscript itself. The card reads as follows:

> "AmsS with A revisions [approximately 200 pp]. Bound with this: "Ms interpolations in second draft" Ams with T and TCC paste-ins [approximately 25 pp]."

This is hardly a clear description, nor can it be. Bluntly put, this manuscript and fragment provide enormous amounts of information and considerable confusion to the textual critic, for sometimes Waugh revised as he wrote, and such revisions are relatively easy to follow. However, some of his revisions came at a much later date and were either interpolated in the

manuscripts at the appropriate place or inserted at the end with a considerable number of cross references, some of them leading nowhere. It is impossible to tell, for example, the point at which the section title "Et in Arcadia ego" was introduced and when it became a feature of Charles Ryder's decorative skull. Several leaves have been bound in upside-down. Although Waugh's handwriting is usually easy to read, there are occasional illegible words, and, equally problematically, in several places Waugh has written so close to the margins that words disappeared wholly or partially into the gutter in the binding process. Most pages are numbered, but not all, and some numbers are duplicated. Thus it is frequently impossible to give a useful page reference to a section of the manuscript. Papers of different textures and sizes were used, making work with this manuscript something of a treasure-hunt.

Robert Murray Davis, who has provided a careful survey of Waugh's novels, including *Brideshead Revisited*, comments on the problems and the challenges of the novel as it existed in its pre-publication state.

> As Waugh noted, he rewrote some passages several times, and not all of the abortive drafts survive. What he saved and bound in the manuscript volume now in the Humanities Research Center differs so widely from the published text that a variorum format would require many appendices or foldouts, since even facing page texts would be inadequate to depict variant states of some half-dozen lengthy passages. (Da, 119)

Davis also produced a tabular account of Waugh's timetable during the writing of *Brideshead*. Useful as Davis's work is, his task differed from mine. He documented the textual transmission of Waugh's novel from manuscript to printed versions. My interest was to discover if character changes, major or minor, could be discovered, most particularly in the manuscript, but also as typescript and different editions were produced.

In conjunction with the manuscripts, I examined a typescript, which appeared to be a fair copy as it lacked proof-reader's notes and was not in need of correction. This 471-page

document was obviously not the first typescript as it differed considerably from the manuscript. It is housed in a file marked Harold Matson. On the title page there is a pencilled note "From Edmund Wilson." The typescript is undated.[25] The third text studied was a Chapman and Hall annotated printed version "Printed version with A revisions and inserts for new edition." The text has 304 pages and is undated, but is almost certainly post-1949 and probably belongs to 1952. The fourth was the Chapman and Hall edition of 1960. Finally, there was my own copy, a Penguin printing (1981), based on the Chapman and Hall 1960 edition. The first Penguin was published in 1951, the second revised edition in 1962, based on the 1960 Chapman and Hall edition. The two last texts have a great deal in common, but in some cases differed radically from the manuscripts.

Waugh revised the principal manuscript extensively, but the first significant textual change which has bearing on Ryder's character modification, comes in the main body of the text in the passage describing the luncheon party Sebastian gives for Ryder to atone for being sick into his rooms. In the 1960 edition and the 1981 Penguin reprint Sebastian tells Ryder about his teddy bear, Aloysius.

> 'That beast Hobson has put Aloysius next door,' he said. 'Perhaps it's as well, as there wouldn't have been any plovers' eggs for him. D'you know, Hobson hates Aloysius....' (BR, 41)

In the manuscript, clearly readable, though crossed out and unnumbered, is the following:

> There were seven of us at luncheon including the teddy-bear which had a place laid for it and its glass filled and drunk by our host. There was also an eighth place - "because there's usually someone I've forgotten."

As was shown in the earlier part of this chapter, Aloysius seems to serve as Sebastian's protector. After Ryder entered Sebastian's life Aloysius was less and less present, and the teddy bear disappeared entirely from the text with the advent of Samgrass. One wonders

whether, if Hobson had allowed Aloysius to attend the luncheon, as he did in the manuscript version, Sebastian might have been saved from Ryder's unfortunate influence. Davis notes this change very briefly, and makes no comment (Da, 156).

As Aloysius as a luncheon guest disappeared from the typed and printed texts, so Ryder's mother disappeared almost entirely from all but the manuscript. In all versions she has been killed, but in the manuscripts Ryder seems to regret her loss. She is very briefly and coldly referred to by her son in the 1960 edition and the Penguin. Ryder and Sebastian are bickering about their limited knowledge of each others' families, Sebastian saying far too little to please Ryder who is "'rather curious about people's families - you see, it's not a thing I know about.... My mother was killed in the war.' 'Oh...how very unusual.' 'She went to Serbia with the Red Cross'" (BR, 49). In the manuscript an explanation follows "with the Red Cross":

> and was buried by a shell. You hear a lot about the fatherless younger generation - none about boys who lost their mothers. I suppose there aren't many. My father is a very shy and peculiar man. He lives in London all the year round and collects almost anything. He has a house on Camden Hill full of his collections. I think he must be quite rich. My mother was, I know.

This is reduced in the 1981 Penguin text to "My father has been rather odd in the head ever since. He just lives alone in London with no friends and footles around collecting things" (BR, 49). This is a much less kind summing up of Ryder's father than in the manuscripts. Sebastian thinks Ryder lucky, in the 1960 Chapman and Hall edition and in the 1981 Penguin. "You don't know what you've been saved. There are lots of us. Look them up in Debrett" (BR, 49). This is a marked change from the manuscript. Sebastian speaks first:

> "You can look up my family in Debrett, that's what Hardcastle would do."
>
> "Well, for that matter you can find me there."
>
> "Yes, Charles," said Sebastian, surprisingly, "I know. Issue of second son of second baronet - *very* obscure. And you've a madly middle-class cousin at your college, who'll be the fourth baronet. You can't stump me on the Ryder family."

The exchange above makes Sebastian a much less sympathetic character and, by contrast, makes Ryder seem more likeable. The Ryder of the other texts does not qualify for a place in Debrett. Davis has examined these passages and considers that "they were changed because they may have reminded Waugh embarrassingly of his youthful self, and also failed to define Ryder socially according to Waugh's wishes" (Da, 125).

As all Waugh's modifications of Ryder's character were for the worse, others in *Brideshead* became more attractive, gentler. In the 1960 edition and the 1981 reprint Anthony Blanche is describing Julia, Cordelia and Lady Marchmain:

> ...Julia, you know what *she* looks like. Who could help it? Her photograph appears as regularly in the illustrated papers as the advertisements for Beecham's Pills. A face of flawless Florentine *quattrocento* beauty; almost anyone with those looks would have been tempted to become artistic; not Lady Julia; she's as smart as - well, as smart as Stefanie. Nothing greenery-yallery about her. So gay, so correct, so unaffected. I wonder if she's incestuous. I doubt it, all she wants is power. There ought to be an Inquisition especially set up to burn her. There's another sister, too, I believe, in the schoolroom. Nothing is known of her *yet* except that her governess went mad and drowned herself not long ago. I'm sure she's abominable. So you see there was really very little left for poor Sebastian to do except be sweet and charming.
>
> It's when one gets to the parents that the bottomless pit opens. My dear, *such* a pair. *How does Lady Marchmain manage it?* It is one of the questions of the age. You have seen her? Very, very beautiful; no artifice, her hair just turning grey in elegant silvery streaks, no rouge, very pale, huge-eyed - it is extraordinary how large those eyes look and how the lids are veined blue where anyone else would have touched them with a finger-tip of paint; pearls and a few great starlike jewels, heirlooms, in ancient settings, a voice as quiet as a prayer, and as powerful. (BR, 65-66)

The cancelled manuscript version is both briefer and more cruel.

> Well you know what she looks like. She is a constant feature of the illustrated papers; a face of ethereal purity, Florentine school, fourteenth century, with shingled hair and the most fashionable possible clothes. You could never guess she was English by the way she dresses. Children and animals love her. Servants love her, the King and Queen love her, other girls love her; my dear she's a fiend; a cold-blooded, acquisitive, intriguing ruthless killer. She's interested in nothing but power and she's been given almost supernatural gifts to achieve it. She is renaissance tragedy and nothing else. There ought to be an Inquisition if only to burn her. There's another sister, I think, in the school room. I've no doubt she's equally abominable in her own way. I expect her governesses go mad in rapid succession, but I've never seen that gorgon Marie-Louise Marchmain.

Here both Julia and Lady Marchmain are monsters, and Julia is dramatically changed in the printed texts.

As Charles Ryder's name was changed from Peter Fenwick, Marie-Louise Marchmain quickly became Teresa. This second name change appears greatly to alter the intended perception of Lady Marchmain. Marie-Louise calls up thoughts of empresses. The resonances of Teresa are not simply of Saints Teresa of Avila and Lisieux, but also of Waugh's eldest child and eldest daughter, Maria Teresa, called Teresa or Tessa, born in 1938. Again Davis notes these changes, but offers no commentary (Da, 156).

In the manuscript Ryder's father is shown more frequently making his son's life miserable with supposed entertainments than he does in any other version of *Brideshead*. In addition to the Jorkins and Orme-Herrick visits Ryder *père* invites Angus Farthing and his sister. Farthing is described as

> "...a crony of mine; that is to say I have lately formed the habit of nodding to him at the Athenaeum."
>
> The Farthing dinner was vastly more painful than its predecessor.... On that black Saturday there were three hours of drawing room entertainment;...
>
> Even in the pain of defeat I was forced to admire my father's resource and dash...
>
> "...You thought Miss Pomfrey talented?" [Ryder *père*]
>
> "Overpowering."

> "Her portrayal of Martin Harvey in 'The Only Way' was not too emotional for drawing-room presentation?..."

Charles Ryder tries to strike back and invites Miss Pomfrey for Sunday lunch, for it was his father's

> invariable custom to lunch at home on Sundays;...
> "I have asked her to luncheon tomorrow to give us more. I hope you don't mind."
> "Mind? My dear boy I am delighted. My only regret is that I shall not be here myself. I have a long-standing engagement elsewhere."...
> "By-the-by, did she show you her tariff?"
> "Tariff?"
> "Evidently not. She probably thought there was closer confidence between us than, alas, exists. It will cost you two guineas. Dinner tonight was three, childrens' parties are five, country houses are waited on by arrangement. Dear boy, where do you suppose I found Miss Pomfrey? I hired her at Harrods."

It later turns out that Miss Pomfrey is a niece of Ryder *père's* oldest and closest friend.

This detailed manuscript passage appears, reduced, in the 1960 Chapman and Hall/1981 Penguin following the Jorkins and Orme-Harrick disasters. It is brief and simple, without detail, as follows: "Strife was internecine during the next fortnight, but I suffered the more, for my father had greater reserves to draw on and a wider territory for manoeuvre, while I was pinned to my bridgehead between the uplands and the sea" (BR, 85-86). There is no hint here that Ryder's father has played a mean if funny joke on his son. Davis comments, *à propos* of these passages, that the "most obvious if not the most important revisions...involved Ryder's war with his father.... Waugh obviously came to feel that, himself amused by the comic malice of the elder Ryder, he had extended the sequence beyond its formal purpose - to emphasize Ryder's rootlessness" (Da, 176). Heath comments: "if we look for the source of...Ryder's spiritual inadequacy, we find...an irresponsible father"

(He, 172). I prefer to see Waugh becoming gentler to the father, more judgemental of the son.

As Ryder's character is darkened, that of Lady Marchmain is made more sympathetic by the excision from all but the manuscript of this long passage:

> The word served its purpose in giving a modern colour to the old theological hypothesis of determinism but I was never happy in its application to my friend; I prefer the metaphor of the Polynesian. There was his religion as he half understood and half accepted it, there was his family and there was myself, all intruders in his impossible solitude, but there was nothing irremediably destructive in any of us. I believe quite simply that his mother drove him mad.
>
> From time to time she and I had many 'little talks'; she had great delicacy in that kind of intercourse, and though I am easily made shy, I never knew her, however intimate or personal the subject, to give me the sense of trespass I should quickly have resented in anyone else. I found her neither saint nor witch but an accomplished, feminine and wholly human woman and, surprising for she was the most important person in the lives of the two people I most loved, one who made no very definite impression on me. I suppose it was as Julia would have put it, the lack [of] 'something chemical' between us.
>
> I do not even remember clearly how she looked. I have the impression of someone unnaturally fragile, with huge limpid eyes and a ready, intelligent smile. She wore the clothes of an uncouth decade with singular grace; I saw her as the majority saw her - the exquisite impeccable ethereal Marie-Louise Marchmain, and yet...and yet I firmly believe that it was she who drove Sebastian mad.

There is no trace of the accusation that Sebastian's condition was caused by Lady Marchmain in subsequent texts. (Rather oddly, this impression seems to have been derived by several people from the television version of *Brideshead*). Lady Marchmain's "little talks" remain, but not much else. Ryder's shyness vanishes too. He is less attractive without it. Davis compares four versions of the description of Lady Marchmain, but his principal comment is one of surprise first that Waugh did not substantially revise this passage at the manuscript stage, but in typescript, and secondly that Waugh did not provide "the setting" for Lady Marchmain until after the manuscript had been typed (Da, 157-60).

One of the most telling and frequently revised passages in *Brideshead Revisited* is that describing the love scene between Ryder and Julia at sea, bound from America to England. In the four texts I examined there are five versions, and the degree of love becomes less with every alteration. Four of the versions are extremely important.

In the manuscript the passage reads thus:

> So at sunset I became her lover and by a forward act took possession of what was already my own; and (illegible) sin in the assuaging of that fierce appetite; the casting off, rather of a great burden which, it seemed I had borne all my life, toiling under it, recognizing its nature - the moment was immortal for me in the symbol and ceremony of love.

In the typescript the text is as follows:

> So at sunset I took formal possession of her as a lover. It was no time for the sweets of luxury; they would come, in their season, with the swallow and the lime flowers; now on the rough water, as I made free of her white breast and narrow loins and, it seemed, in assuaging that fierce appetite, cast a burden which I had borne all my life, toiled under, not knowing its nature - now, while the waves still broke and thundered on the prow, the moment was immortal for me in its symbol and ceremony of love.

The Chapman and Hall text, undated but probably 1952, read through Waugh's revisions and corrections--hence the illegible word--originally said:

> So at sunset I took formal possession of her as her lover. It was not time for the sweets of luxury; they would come, in their season, with the swallows and the lime flowers. Now on the rough water, as I had made free of her narrow loins and (illegible) seemed now, in assuaging that fierce appetite, cast a burden which I had borne all my life, toiled under, not knowing its nature - now while the waves still broke and thundered on the prow, the act of possession was a symbol; a rite of ancient origin and solemn meaning. (BR, 261, 1952?)

Waugh used the earlier Chapman and Hall edition that I examined at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas at Austin to produce his final version of this scene. This, corrected in Waugh's handwriting, tipped into the Chapman and Hall volume, appears in the 1981 Penguin printing I have used.

> It was no time for the sweets of luxury; they would come, in their season, with the swallow and the lime flowers. Now on the rough water there was a formality to be observed, no more. It was as though a deed of conveyance of her narrow loins had been drawn and sealed. I was making my first entry as a freeholder of a property I would enjoy and develop at leisure. (BR, 297)

This is no love scene, but a cold-blooded real estate transaction. Is it possible that Waugh could have described thus Ryder's symbolic entry into the House and City of God?

Davis has examined one of these passages identical with the last one cited above, but from the 1960 Chapman and Hall edition, and added another from the 1945 Chapman and Hall English edition. He quotes and agrees with a reviewer for *The Times Library Supplement*. "The *TLS* reviewer argues that the revision contains a 'horrible double meaning [that] can hardly be unintentional. Suddenly it seems as if all the time it was the house, the property that he loved'" (Da, 184). This is surely the case, except that "wanted" or "lusted after" are better words, in my context, than "loved."

There are two further passages of consequence, one of them from in the "Prologue," the other from the "Epilogue." Davis examines the former and he notes that Ryder "is already Catholic - though Waugh removed from the manuscript the sole implication of this" (Da, 185), and replaced it with a more cryptic comment:

> 'Brigade Headquarters are coming round next week. Great barrack of a place. I've just had a snoop round. Very ornate I'd call it. And a queer thing, there's a sort of R.C. Church attached. I looked in and there was a kind of service going on - just a padre and one old man. I felt very awkward. More in your line than mine.' (BR, 26)

Finally, there is an excised passage that Davis appears not to have examined, or rather, not to have recorded and discussed. In the manuscript "Epilogue" there is the following passage:

> "...and there's a blitzed, evacuee R.C. padre. Lady Julia Flyte...opened the chapel for him; that's in bounds for the troops - surprising lot use it too. You're not R.C. by any chance?"//"Yes, as a matter of fact I am."//"Well look him up. He's quite a pleasant old fellow..."

This is excerpted from a much longer, eventually excised passage. Within the brief section quoted above, the words "You're not R.C. by any chance?"//"Yes, as a matter of fact I am" have been cancelled. According to Waugh's note on the page this change was made on June 7. The following day: "having been to communion at Gidleigh, I finished the last version of *Brideshead Revisited* and sent it to be typed" (D, 579).

I can only conjecture Waugh's meaning. The most plausible explanation, in my context, would be to cast doubt on the verity of Ryder's conversion in the printed editions. Certainly Waugh has done much to make Ryder seem a thoroughly undesirable convert, and nothing to make him seem worthy. It is possible that Waugh wished to emphasise that even someone as venially and mortally sinful--as unheroic--as Ryder is salvageable, that the grace of God is boundless.

Given the fashion in which Waugh progressively blackens Charles Ryder's character, making him ever more unpleasant and shallow from manuscript to typescript to printed editions, it is hard to believe that he is the hero of *Brideshead Revisited*. It also appears, from close examination of the final text, with a following up of the religious and theological possibilities Waugh introduces, that *Brideshead Revisited* is not the light-hearted novel which Christopher Sykes seems, at first, to imply:

> Into this drab world [of the 1940's] there flashed for the happy few this immense entertainment, with its colour, its appeal to nostalgia stronger then than at most times, its wit, its unconcern with the 'pressing' problems of the hour and showing but the slightest sociological interest; abounding with what the world was most short of, fun. Further to the book's advantage, the fun was not a sign of essential frivolity; through it there sounded a grave note attuned to the seriousness of the preoccupations of a dreadful hour. The

> essential subject of the book was not youthful irresponsibility, youthful and mature love, the pageant of fashion, the splendour of aristocratic society, but certain Last Things: how to face death, the Christian Truths, the world-wide claims of the Catholic Church. (S, 337)

One begins to find it easy to understand why critical opinion about the nature of *Brideshead Revisited* is so diverse. For here is one of Waugh's closest friends, a co-religionist, a contemporary, a writer, someone one expects to understand Waugh's work, being unclear about it. Sykes' "fun" is serious business, and then apparently, only decoration. The real subject matter of the book is "certain Last Things." The capitalisation of Last Things confuses the issue still further for, as far as the Catechism is concerned, the Last Things are four: Death, Judgement, Hell and Heaven. Yet only "how to face death," among Sykes' phrases, corresponds readily with the Catechism's Last Things. Sykes at least makes no bones about *Brideshead Revisited* being a Catholic novel.

This is unquestionable, no matter what the beliefs of a critic may be. The Catholic Church is so present as to seem an additional character. Waugh goes to considerable length to explain some of the Church's tenets and practices. Indeed, in a small way *Brideshead Revisited* may be described as a didactic Catholic novel (but absolutely not Edmund Wilson's "Catholic tract"), for Waugh informs his readers accurately, but not to proselytise. Davis records that "by June 20 he had delivered the completed typescript to Chapman and Hall, while another copy was at Oxford being checked for errors in theology" (Da, 150).

> The most important corrections came from Ronald Knox, and led to Waugh's modification of the scene in which Cordelia described the closing of the chapel to Ryder. Evelyn had never witnessed such an event and he imagined how it would occur. Ronald Knox gave him the facts, which are more prosaic than would appear from Evelyn's original description. He shortened the passage, which remains nonetheless one of the most memorable in the book. (S, 336)

On other Catholic matters Waugh needed no correction. He describes carefully the administration of the Last Sacrament to an unspeaking Lord Marchmain.

> The priest bent over Lord Marchmain and blessed him.... 'Now,' said the priest, 'I know you are sorry for all the sins of your life, aren't you? Make a sign, if you can. You're sorry aren't you?'...'Try and remember your sins; tell God you are sorry. I am going to give you absolution. While I am giving it, tell God you are sorry you have offended him.' He began to speak in Latin. I recognized the words '*ego te absolvo in nomine Patris*...' and saw the priest make the sign of the cross.... The priest took a little silver box from his pocket and spoke again in Latin, touching the dying man with an oil wad; he finished what he had to do, put away the box and gave the final blessing. (BR, 384-85)[26]

Cordelia, often a valuable source of Catholic information, explains to the less knowledgeable Catholic, Cara, Marchmain's mistress, "Having a Requiem doesn't mean you go to heaven necessarily" (BR, 375). The proper way for a Catholic to behave on entering a Catholic church or chapel is recounted. "We entered [the chapel] by the public porch;... Sebastian dipped his fingers into the water stoup, crossed himself and genuflected" (BR, 48). Two aspects of Catholicism and marriage are explained to Rex Mottram, and so to the reader. First: "'Don't you realize, you poor sweet oaf,' said Julia, 'that you can't get married as a Catholic when you've another wife alive?' 'But I *haven't*. Didn't I just tell you that we were divorced six years ago.' 'But you can't be divorced as a Catholic'" (BR, 225). And then: "It was explained to [Rex] that a mixed marriage was a very unostentatious affair. 'How d'you mean "mixed"? I'm not a nigger or anything.' 'No, darling, between a Catholic and a Protestant'" (BR, 220). Ryder too needs explanations: "'I wish someone would explain to me,' I said, 'quite what the significance of these sacraments is. Do you mean that if he dies alone he goes to hell, and if a priest puts oil on him -' 'Oh, it's not the oil,' said Cordelia, 'that's to heal him'" (BR, 374).

Waugh also includes a less common piece of information about an increasingly uncommon habit. "It was called the Easter party, though in fact it began on the Tuesday of Easter Week, for the Flytes all went into retreat at the guest-house of a monastery from Maundy Thursday until Easter" (BR, 150). Waugh himself always went into retreat as the Flytes did. He knew Catholicism thoroughly. He also knew, as only he could, precisely what *Brideshead* is about. "Its theme - the operation of divine grace on a group of diverse but closely connected characters -"... (BR, 9). Divine grace brought Sebastian back to the Church in which he died a saintly death. Divine grace brought Julia back too, in pain, but still needing to be a Catholic. Cordelia never left the Church and divine grace made her hard adult life both useful and bearable, unchaotic, as it did for Waugh. Bridey too remained in the Church, and although he was denied the grace of a priestly vocation, he at least found the small happiness he sought in a Catholic though unfruitful marriage. Lady Marchmain, whose life was little but spiritual suffering, was, by divine grace, given the blessed release of death to escape a barely tolerable world. Divine grace brought Lord Marchmain back to the Church at the moment of his death. That seems to account for all the members of the group, "diverse" in their experiences of Catholicism, except Charles Ryder.

It can be argued that Ryder never belonged to the group, except transitorily. To all intents and purposes he abandoned Sebastian, or Sebastian escaped from him. Cordelia, not Ryder, saw Sebastian as he was close to death. Ryder had travels to go on, pictures to paint, 'Boy' Mulcaster's sister to marry. Cordelia somehow managed to ensure that Sebastian remained, in heart at least, a group member. Julia ultimately rejected Charles when she chose the Church instead of him. Would this have happened if Ryder had truly been a member of the group? To see Ryder's discovery of Catholicism as a consolation prize for having lost

Julia is too crass for Waugh. Bridey never understood Ryder, and vice versa. For Bridey, Ryder was never a member of the group. Cordelia, with her almost infinite capacity for charity, accepted Ryder at virtually every stage of his involvement with Brideshead. But he has lost her; by the "Epilogue" he is entirely alone. This seems a most telling piece of evidence. Cordelia never abandoned anyone. Yet there is nothing in *Brideshead Revisited* to show that she and Ryder kept in touch with each other. Such a failure of friendship as Ryder's seems automatically to place him outside the group, for Cordelia would never have allowed a bona fide member to *become* excluded. Ryder betrayed Lady Marchmain and actively fought against her for possession of Sebastian. This could not have happened if both belonged to the group. Unquestionably Lady Marchmain did. As, by the skin of his teeth, did Lord Marchmain. Of course it is overtly his deathbed reconversion that brings Ryder into the Church. But Ryder's conversion seems, as I have argued, to be of doubtful authenticity.

Thus, Ryder's membership of the group can be disputed. The honesty of his conversion may be doubted. As Waugh reworked his manuscript he painted Ryder ever darker; his other modifications of characters altered only for the good. Scrutinised carefully, throughout *Brideshead*, Ryder seems entirely properly to be an outsider. He cannot "Come Inside" (E, 366) as Waugh adjured both friends and his reading public. He has done too much harm. He lacks even the divine grace to suffer for his sins as Julia suffered for hers. As *Brideshead Revisited* closes, he is both complacent and deviously, deceitfully, complaisant.

CHAPTER IV

Helena: A Pilgrimage to Faith and Hope

Helena is, I believe, Waugh's only entirely positive novel, his most personal one, and certainly his most hopefully Catholic one. In spite of this, it lacks none of the pointed satire of most of his other work. This is true, perhaps, because Waugh was able to invent all of Helena's brisk speech and sharp mind. It should be remembered that neither Waugh nor Helena often suspends the well-honed axe-blade of judgement, so the novel is full of *their* ideas and opinions. It seems likely that Helena's journey to faith is to some extent Waugh's, though he would not have presumed to identify himself closely with the empress saint. It is worthwhile, however, to look, briefly, at some parallels in the two lives.

Waugh's novel is a highly imaginative account of the life of Helena, whom he chooses to make the daughter of "Old King" Coel of Essex, and of her search for the True Cross. In spite of the inventiveness of his account of St. Helena's "Invention" of the Cross, Waugh appears to have done more background reading and pestering of his friends for information than for any other novel. This is hardly surprising. Waugh's other novels are set in times and places he knew or had experienced; Helena existed in a historical time and a geographical place beyond Waugh's personal ken. In spite of the fact that almost nothing is known about Helena herself, her period and setting have been thoroughly documented. Waugh, who read history at Oxford (S, 75), was much too punctilious a writer to be slipshod about historical detail.

On May 6, 1945 Waugh wrote in his diary "I have done enough reading to start tomorrow on *Helena*" (D, 627). But *Helena* took Waugh longer to write than any of his other novels, partly because of the time spent collecting and absorbing information, but

principally because he was side- tracked by *The Loved One*. Still, in 1946, Waugh was both gathering material and writing. His friend Robert Henriques, "the only religious Jew of my acquaintance," was asked to recommend "any Jewish books in English" describing "the Jews in Palestine after the destruction of the Temple." He also asked Henriques "can you tell me anything about the Wandering Jew? Is he purely a mediaeval Christian legend or does he correspond to any tradition in your Faith?" (L, 219-20). Henriques was obviously helpful, and Waugh asked further questions, which resulted in a visit from Henriques, "bringing the *Jewish Encyclopedia*" (D, 642).

Nancy Mitford was cajoled into helping:

> Can you politely ask any of your jewish friends whether they know the sources of the Wandering Jew legend? Encyclopaedia Brit. is very weak on the subject. I am introducing him (B. Howard again) into the Helena book and would like to get the full facts. (L, 220-21)

And Waugh continued to read and think, as well as to write. He noted on January 26, 1946:

> The first book of *Helena* was finished last week and sent to be typed. I am reading hard for the second and third....
>
> This morning the *Itinerary of Bordeaux*[1] arrived from the London Library, and all day off and on I have been fretting about the date of its composition and Helena's journey, and finding it mentioned pompously and slyly in Gibbon. Then, quite suddenly, while I was reading something else, the solution came to me - absolutely simple. He didn't mention the Cross because he never saw it; it was not on view. I have been to Rome many times and not seen the Cross there. It was only exposed on Good Friday and he was not in Jerusalem more than a few days. And Eusebius did not mention it because he hated it. (D, 641)

Waugh was still working on *Helena* in 1948. "My Lenten resolution to start work on *Helena* has not come to much" (D, 696), and it was not until October 1950 that *Helena* was published (Li, xii).

To some extent, though with obvious and deliberate major differences, Waugh's account of Helena tells a good deal about him. Both are quintessentially English; both became converts to the Catholic Church; both find their *raisons d'être* in their faith; and both believe firmly in the historical truth of Catholicism. They also share some character traits--impatience with fools being one of them.

Waugh's Helena, an Essex princess in her late teens, highly-educated, passionate about horses and hunting, longing to visit the Great City, Rome, unexpectedly falls in love with and marries Constantius Chlorus, an officer in the Roman legions. With him she leaves England forever, and begins a journey that will last for the rest of her life. Chlorus, as Helena always calls him, for he was green-faced and hung-over when they met, has imperial blood and eventually becomes Emperor. But by this time he has divorced Helena for a more politically useful wife. He also keeps her son by him, Constantine, who will be Emperor too in his turn, and, more importantly, will be baptised a Christian. Constantine's version of Christianity is very different from the one that is to be Helena's. Among other things he invents, in the modern sense of he word, holy relics. Waugh plays on Helena's Invention or discovery of the True Cross.

Abandoned by Chlorus, Helena spends years in military posts and minor courts, surrounded by women whose collective hobby is dabbling in various forms of heretical Christianity, the more abstruse and insubstantial the better. Eventually she escapes to peaceful retirement by the sea in Dalmatia, whence she is dragged, after many years, by Constantine, or rather, by Constantine's family and cohorts. All go to Rome, where Helena is largely ignored by her son, much changed by his imperial role. The dashing young soldier Helena remembers from twenty years ago has become a pompous, bedizened, rouged fashion-

plate in an emerald wig. "From the neck down he was all upholstery. A surcoat of imperial purple, laced with floriations of gold wire and studded with amorphous pearls, hung stiff as a carpet to the carpeted floor" (H, 103-04).

Helena has been baptised, time and place unknown, but her Christianity, like Helena herself, is solid, practical, founded on fact. In order to prove the truth of her down-to-earth faith, Helena realises, something literally substantial is needed. What better than the Cross on which Christ, God Incarnate, was really crucified. From this moment her life has only one purpose, the Invention of the True Cross. In Jerusalem she seeks and finds not and grows as weary as any ordinary eighty-year-old. Then, in a dream, the Wandering Jew explains to Helena exactly where to find her prize. His directions are accurate and Helena's purpose is served.

Having made her find, Helena returns to Rome. A generous woman, she gives the nails that fixed Christ to the Cross to Constantine:

> He was delighted with his nails. The second he stuck in his hat. The third he put to a still more idiosyncratic use. He sent it to the smith and had it forged into a snaffle for his horse. When Helena heard this she was at first a little taken aback. But presently she smiled, giggled and was heard to utter the single, enigmatic word 'stabularia.' (H, 158)

(In love, Chlorus had called Helena 'stabularia' because when they met she was trying on his horse's bridle, the bit between her teeth. She was his dear 'ostler' for a while.) Helena died shortly after her discovery.

> They carried her body to Rome and laid it in the sarcophagus Constantine had designed for himself, in the mausoleum he had built three miles out of the City on the road to Palestrina. There she lay undisturbed until the reign of Pope Urban VIII, when her bones were removed to the church of Ara Coeli where they lie today. Within a few yards of her, on the steps of that Church, Edward Gibbon later sat and premeditated his history. (H, 158)

Not only is Helena laid to rest, so, in a sense is Waugh's joke at Gibbon's expense. This is not so much a punch-line as a final palpable hit at Waugh's least favourite historian.

All Helena's story Waugh invented on the basis of a single scrap of fact, as he stated in his essay "St. Helena, Empress" (1952):

> [There are] the saints who are remembered for a single act. To this class Helena eminently belongs. In extreme old age as Empress dowager, she made a journey into one part of her son's immense dominions, to Jerusalem. From that journey spring the relics of the True Cross that are venerated everywhere in Christendom. That is what we know; most else is surmise. (E, 407)

Waugh felt he could not over-emphasise the crucial importance of this one solid piece of evidence:

> ...her enterprise was something life-bringing.
>
> It is not fantastic to claim that her discovery entitles her to a place in the Doctorate of the Church, for she was not merely adding one more stupendous trophy to the hoard of relics which were everywhere being unearthed and enshrined. She was asserting in sensational form a dogma that was in danger of neglect.... Everything about the new religion was capable of interpretation, could be refined and diminished; everything except the unreasonable assertion that God became man and died on the Cross; not a myth or an allegory; true God, truly incarnate, tortured to death at a particular moment in time, at a particular geographical place, as a matter of plain historical fact. (E, 409-10)

To Maurice Bowra, who wrote to Waugh objecting to his treatment of the Wandering Jew, but otherwise approving of *Helena*, he wrote, "The Incarnation is no use without the Cross and vice versa. Everyone in the 4th century seems to have been concerned only with the Incarnation, except Helena. That is why in her way she is as important as Athanasius" (L, 341).

Without doubt Helena as human being and saint was both important and precious to Waugh. Above all, they shared the constant belief that historical fact lay at the heart of their faith. In 1964 Waugh wrote to Lady Diana Cooper, "Do you believe in the Incarnation &

Redemption in the full historical sense in which you believe in the battle of El Alamein?" (L, 624). Christopher Derrick, reviewing *Helena* in 1974 wrote: [*Helena*] "is the most theological of Waugh's novels, this story of a cheerful horsey girl out of Debrett who is slowly broken and matured into sainthood, while English empiricism keeps her feet on the ground, her attention upon fact when the whole world seems obsessed with subtle meaning" (CH, 336).

There are a number of other charactristics that Waugh felt, modestly, he had in common with Helena. Christopher Sykes said that "Religion was the centre of Evelyn's life" (S, 595), and it became so for Helena. Both, according to Waugh's story of Helena's life, were English converts to the Church of Rome; both suffered a similar ill. In Helena's case it was the deep boredom of an intelligent, lively-minded and educated woman adrift in a sea of trivial conversation and dilettante religion; in Waugh's it was the spiritual pain of *accidia*. To some extent Waugh's account of Helena is a version of his own life, a life he described in 1949 in the essay entitled "Come Inside":

> I was born in England in 1903 with a strong hereditary predisposition toward the Established Church.... The enthusiasm which my little school-fellows devoted to birds' eggs and model trains I turned on church affairs and spoke glibly of chasubles and Erastianism. I was accordingly sent to the school which was reputed to have the strongest ecclesiastical bent. At the age of 16 I formally notified the school chaplain that there was no God. At the age of 26 I was received into the Catholic Church to which all subsequent experience has served to confirm my loyalty....
>
> I shed my inherited faith as lightheartedly as though it had been an outgrown coat. The circumstances were these: during the First World War many university dons patriotically volunteered to release young school-masters to serve in the army. Among these there came to my school a leading Oxford theologian, now a bishop. This learned and devout man inadvertently made me an atheist. He explained to his divinity class that none of the books of the Bible were by their supposed authors; he invited us to speculate, in the manner of the fourth century, on the nature of Christ. When he had removed the inherited axioms of my faith I found myself quite unable to follow him in

> the higher flights of logic by which he reconciled his own scepticism with his position as a clergyman.
>
> At the same time I read Pope's *Essay on Man*; the notes led me to Leibnitz and I began an unguided and half-comprehended study of metaphysics. I advanced far enough to be thoroughly muddled about the nature of cognition. It seemed simplest to abandon the quest and assume that man was incapable of knowing anything. I have no doubt I was a prig and a bore but I think that if I had been a Catholic boy at a Catholic school I should have found among its teaching orders someone patient enough to examine with me my callow presumption. Also, if I had been fortified by the sacraments, I should have valued my faith too highly to abandon it so capriciously. At my school I was quite correctly regarded as 'going through a phase' normal to all clever boys, and left to find my own way home.
>
> The next ten years of my life are material more suitable to the novelist than the essayist. Those who have read my works will perhaps understand the character of the world into which I exuberantly launched myself. Ten years of that world sufficed to show me that life there or anywhere, was unintelligible and unendurable without God. The conclusion was obvious; the question now arises: why Rome?... England was Catholic for nine hundred years, then Protestant for three hundred, then agnostic for a century. The Catholic structure still lies lightly buried beneath every phase of English life; history, topography, law, archaeology everywhere reveal Catholic origins. Foreign travel anywhere reveals the local, temporary character of the heresies and schisms and the universal, eternal character of the Church. It was self-evident to me that no heresy or schism could be right and the Church wrong. It was possible that all were wrong, that the whole Christian revelation was an imposture or a misconception. But if the Christian revelation was true, then the Church was the society founded by Christ and all other bodies were only good so far as they had salvaged something from the wrecks of the Great Schism and the Reformation. This proposition seemed so plain to me that it admitted of no discussion. It only remained to examine the historical and philosophic grounds for supposing the Christian revelation to be genuine. I was fortunate enough to be introduced to a brilliant and holy priest who undertook to prove this to me, and so on firm intellectual conviction but with little emotion I was admitted to the Church.
>
> My life since then has been an endless delighted tour of discovery in the huge territory of which I was made free. (E, 366-68)

By 1945 Waugh's delight had been modified by the way of the world, but he was still able to rejoice in his faith. His Preface to the second edition of *Edmund Campion* (1946) shows clearly his post-war state of mind, and serves to emphasise *Helena's* positive Catholic tone:

> We have come much nearer to Campion since Simpson's day. He wrote in the flood-tide of toleration when Elizabeth's persecution seemed as remote as Diocletian's. We know now that his age was a brief truce in an unending war. The martyrdom of Father Pro in Mexico re-enacted Campion's in faithful detail. We are nearer Campion than when I wrote of him. We have seen the Church drawn underground in country after country. In fragments and whispers we get news of other saints in the prison camps of Eastern and South-eastern Europe, and of cruelty and degradation more savage than anything in Tudor England, of the same, pure light shining in darkness, uncomprehended. The haunted, trapped, murdered priest is our contemporary and Campion's voice sounds to us across the centuries as though he were walking at our elbow.[2]

Historically speaking, Helena's discovery of the True Cross followed relatively closely on Diocletian's murderings and martyrings.[3] It serves, as did Campion's execution, as more than a symbol of hope and continuing faith. For Waugh, to retell Helena's life at such a post-war moment must have seemed both natural and necessary. His faith remained unshaken, but his hope was in need of refreshment. Helena's story offered the opportunity to recount and re-invent one of the most hopeful lives of a saint, for Helena died triumphant, naturally, and at peace. It also gave Waugh the chance to look at the life of a convert like himself, and find, perhaps, comforting coincidences.

In his childhood and early youth Waugh normally, naturally and with a sense of interested ease, took part in high Anglican rituals and ceremonies. This was a matter of course, and of examined and understood propriety. Helena's experience was, in its historical setting, similar:

> In her own country the gods had been honoured in their seasons; Helena had prayed, year by year, devoutly and at ease at the altars of her household and her people, had greeted the returning Spring with sacrifices, had sought to placate the powers of death, had honoured the sun and the earth and the fertile seed. (H, 42)

At Lancing, Waugh became an atheist. Though there is no exact parallel to this in Helena's life, for years after she leaves Britain she lives a life deprived of her own gods and

is offered no possible substitutes; she is therefore effectively godless. She lives, with courage and resignation, a life devoid of all spiritual and many temporal comforts. "Helena had left Nish without regret and she travelled forward without hope" (H, 57). Whether, like Waugh, she found life "unintelligible and unendurable" without faith one cannot guess. But her reception into the Church seems to have given her a *raison d'être*:

> ...Helena had been baptized.
> None knows when or where, No record was made.
> Nothing was built or founded. There was no public holiday. Privately and humbly, like thousands of others, she stepped down into the font and emerged a new woman.... She was one seed of a vast germination. (H, 89)

With their conversions Waugh's and Helena's purposeful lives begin. The aged Helena receives not only a clear sense of mission, but the physical and mental stamina to pursue her goal--the Invention of the True Cross. This she proceeds to do with remarkable intelligence, tenacious common sense, sound archaeological principles and strength of mind. First she achieves the great ambition of her youth and reaches Rome. The Rome she finds is somehow wanting, though populated with large numbers of her co-religionists. Though unsatisfied, she nonetheless, democratically rather than as Empress Dowager, hears Mass with them. As an interesting aside, Waugh heard his last Mass in a small chapel near his house in the privacy usually afforded the great men and women of history, and at Easter, so close to the time Helena made her great find:

> When she heard Mass at the Lateran basilica - as she did often in preference to her private chapel - she went without ostentation and stood simply with the congregation.... The intimate family circle of which she was a member bore no mark of kinship. The barrow-man grilling his garlic sausages in the gutter, the fuller behind his reeking public pots, the lawyer or the lawyer's clerk might each and all be one with the Empress Dowager in the Mystical Body. And the abounding heathen might at any hour become one with them. There was no mob, only a vast multitude of souls clothed in a vast variety of body, milling about in the Holy City, in the See of Peter. (H, 93)

In Rome Helena is as close to the heart of her religion, and as far from the great wall protecting the City, as it is possible to be. Years before, her former husband, Constantius, explained the wall to her as something he loved, in response to her question "Must there always be a wall?"

> Think of it, mile upon mile from snow to desert, a single great girdle round the civilized world; inside, peace, decency, the law, the altars of the Gods, industry, the arts, order; outside wild beasts and savages, forest and swamp, bloody mumbo-jumbo, men like wolf-packs; and along the wall the armed might of The Empire, sleepless, holding the line. (H, 39)

For Constantius the wall is to keep dark forces at bay. Helena, like Waugh a natural proselytiser, and more open-minded than her husband, knows, even before she understands, that faith, the Church, should climb the wall and lighten the darkness. The military idea of a wall to separate the two she finds primitive, ungenerous, and unimaginative. Does she also foresee the collapse of the wall which only the Roman Catholic faith, not the Roman Empire, will survive?

There is far more to *Helena*, however, than the simple connections linking her life and Waugh's. Much more importantly, from a literary point of view, is the way in which Waugh so subtly tells her tale. He succeeds, among many other things, in producing a short, crisp, witty *Catholic* "post-figuring" of *Pilgrim's Progress*. Many reviewers and critics fail to see this, however. As Waugh had foreseen, his work was far from widely admired. He was devoted to and even enamoured of his subject, St. Helena and her Invention of the True Cross, but was strangely self-deprecating about his work. To Monsignor Ronald Knox he wrote in 1945, "Now I am writing an unhistorical life of St. Helena which absolutely no one will be able to bear" (L, 206). He still felt much the same in 1949, as he told his friend and fellow writer, Anne Fremantle, and, temporarily, his interest seemed to be waning:

> I write a sentence a week on the Empress Helena. It will be interesting only to the very few people who know exactly as much history as I do. The millions who know more will be disgusted; the few who know less puzzled. Americans will inevitably fall into these two classes only. (L, 310)

Almost from the beginning Waugh had little hope of *Helena's* financial success, as he wrote to A.D. Peters in 1946, but his heart was in the work, as his wish for its physical being makes clear:

> 'The Quest of the Empress Dowager' is one third written & very good. No money in it for either of us. My wish is to publish it in an edition de grande luxe & perhaps reprint for the general public in five or six years time. Could you in odd moments sniff round and see if any of the private presses - Golden Cockerel, Nonesuch etc. are interested. The yanks will think it awful.... (L, 219)

However, his positive sense of the value of his subject and his handling of the topic triumphed, and in November 1949 he wrote to Nancy Mitford, "Home, now, thank God, and at work again on *Helena* which is to be my MASTERPIECE. No one will like it at all" (L, 312).

His fears (or hopes?) about American reaction seem to be borne out by this anonymous review in *Time* in 1950:

> Satirist Waugh has put away his satire this time. The religious theme of 'Helena' runs close to the ruling passion of Waugh's life, his adopted Roman Catholicism - perhaps too close to it. Any man with his heart in his mouth must either blurt the whole thing out or must be content to say almost nothing at all. In 'Helena', Waugh says almost nothing about his own feelings, about his characters, or about the religious motives that compelled their lives. Not even St. Helena herself is much more than a dignified old lady of purpose. (CH, 323-24)

How it is possible to read *Helena* and miss the satire, the irony, even the fun, is a mystery with a small m. With *Helena* Waugh had the perfect opportunity to exercise his biographical skills without being professionally required to forsake satire. This he certainly did when

writing biographies of Edmund Campion and Ronald Knox. The former is too crammed with properly admiring words and awe for the martyr; the latter suffers because Waugh seems to have felt obliged to distance himself from his good friend, and be overly discreet about the part he played in Knox's life. With *Helena*, Waugh could let his mind and his pen range freely, producing a compelling portrait of an extraordinary woman. Yet he still retained the satiric tone for which he is famous, and which suits Helena's sometimes acid tongue. At the same time he provided a generous portrait of his heroine, with human and humane affection. He has also, as the *Time* reviewer fails to see, revealed his own ideas and feelings quite specifically. *Helena*, as a whole, speaks Waugh's mind, as did Cordelia Flyte.

Ironically, another American, Gouverneur Paulding, also writing at the time of *Helena's* publication, regards the novel highly and values it as the satire that, at least in part, it is:

> When the scene is placed far enough back in time the opportunities for jokes, anachronisms and satire are limitless. Mr. Waugh, as one would expect, misses none of them: his British generals were to [regard] Italians [as] Hitler-like Fascist 'cads'; the 'Army wives of the Imperial forces chatter away about promotions as if they were Allied wives in the Berlin of the recent Air Lift. The worldly philosopher lectures to them when they find nothing better with which to fill the long afternoons of garrison town life. Like Hitler with his horoscopic advisors, Constantine calls in witches for consultation....'
>
> In 'Helena,' the play of words, and the fireworks, the exquisite descriptions of landscapes, and even the finished portraits of the heroine, her husband and her son, are always subordinate to the author's broad vision of the mixed anguish and hope with which the world of Constantine's times are filled. With remarkable economy and selectivity, Mr. Waugh has managed to get all of this immense drama into the brief episodes of this short novel. (CH, 321-23)

Reviewers who want to throw the book at Waugh tend to hurl *Debrett*. As Derrick did (see above p. 114), so does John Raymond, in his 1950 review.

> His new novel is a quasi-historical *sortie* in the style of Maugham's 'Catalina' (though a great deal wittier) on the subject of Helena, saint and dowager, whose discovery of the true cross became one of the great medieval legends of The Christian Church. The author eschews history in favour of the tradition...that Constantine's mother was an Essex princess. This gives him the opportunity to surrender to one of his favourite vices in the way of characterisation - the clear-eyed, clean-limbed daughter of Diana, with a niche in Debrett and an ultimate refuge in the Great Good Place. (CH, 320-21)

Raymond's comparison of *Helena* with Somerset Maugham's last minor novel, written in 1948, even with his proviso, is damning. *Catalina* is an historico-comedy, a celebration of Spain, set largely at the time of the Inquisition, but with clear allusions to twentieth-century political events. One wonders how many "daughter[s] of Diana" Raymond has in mind. Only Julia Flyte seems partly to fit his picture--and she doesn't hunt. Brenda Last had a page in Debrett, but never gave a thought to the "Great Good Place." Neither did Waugh's other bright young women, and Virginia Crouchback, the only other contender, had yet to be imagined.

Frederick Stopp, in this brief passage taken from a very long review written for *The Month* in 1953,[4] focuses on *Helena* as a Catholic novel, and, as he describes Helena's, hints at the inevitability of Waugh's conversion that Alec, Waugh's brother, had seen:

> ...it is possible that his retelling of the legend of St. Helena will be regarded as a momentary episode, an aberration even, in the work of this sharp delineator of the modern social scene.... [This] is a critical confusion, since there are not two Mr. Waughs - the serious and the frivolous - but one, and this one writer has in 'Helena' achieved a work which is entirely of one piece. The alleged incongruity, that between the supernatural and the natural, this is a problem that will always face the 'Catholic' novel.... Helena's discovery of the True Cross is the avalanche which had been impending all her life....as in other recent Catholic novels the dimension in which [it] take[s] place is a poetic one, even if the setting is one admitting or even based on theological implications. (CH, 325-33)

Graham Greene too approved of *Helena*, to Waugh's relief, expressed in November, 1950:

> Thanks awfully for writing about *Helena*.[5] I hardly hoped you would like it. I am hugely exhilarant [sic] to hear that you do. Most of the reviews I have seen have been peculiarly offensive. I don't believe this modern kind of chastisement is really salutary. It is like being jostled around in a crowd. (L, 340-41)

Others among Waugh's friends, like Graham Greene fellow Catholics, writing twenty years and more after *Helena's* publication, seem more than willing to chastise. Christopher Sykes and Father Martin D'Arcy denounced *Helena* as a failure. Sykes described it thus: "Certainly *Helena* is an uneven book, containing passages utterly unworthy of its author" (S, 428). He makes it plain that "unevenness is not a mortal blemish" (S, 428), but for him there were depths below which no author of Waugh's talents should be allowed to sink. He singled out for special blame a passage reporting a conversation between Helena and Lactantius in the presence of a pet monkey:

> '"Suppose"', says Lactantius, '"that in years to come, when the Church's troubles seem to be over, there should come an apostate of my own trade, a false historian, with the mind of Cicero or Tacitus and the soul of an animal," and he nodded towards the gibbon who fretted his gold chain and chattered for fruit....' The pun, a miserably obvious one, fails to come off, and certainly fails to carry the reader to the side of Lactantius. *C'est plus qu'un crime, c'est une faute*.[6] (S, 428-29)

It is a matter of opinion whether the pun fails or not. Surely it can be seen to succeed at several different levels, for the reader and in the text. For example, it illuminates elements of character in both Lactantius and Helena. Lactantius whom Helena, as a girl, had longed to meet, is, in flesh and blood, a small disappointment to her. He is still learned, articulate, and a rhetorician of power. But he has become a member of the court, someone ready to have Helena "make a show of him" (H, 78) in exchange for a rather agreeable life. His talents

have not left him, but he has developed a tendency towards pomposity, a characteristic far from dear to Helena. The keenly intelligent young woman who remains at old Helena's core would rejoice in both pun and monkey. One should not forget that as a matron of advancing years she could still giggle, Cordelia-like, at Marcias, her tutor in childhood and adolescence, rediscovered in late middle-age. Here, as so often, Waugh shows Helena whole--a woman who acquired new elements of personality with every passing year, whilst remaining true to her young admirable self. And is the reader supposed to be won to Lactantius' side? Is it not Helena, exiled, deprived, divorced but never defeated, who must always have the reader on her side? For, as Waugh shows throughout his text, Helena, born to discover the True Cross, contains within her a multiplicity of human traits. Thus, she can stand for all men and women who, for Waugh and his Catholic fellows, are born for a specific purpose. Besides, Empress she may be, but she is still Stabularia, sometime wife of Chlorus. Nicknames and puns still appeal to her sense of humour. Humour is something that both Lactantius and Sykes lack at this juncture.

Sykes goes on to say, "Many regard [Helena] as a calamitous aberration of his talent" (S, 428), and continues "The book becomes discordant, without clear intention, and ends lamely, almost in a pietist spirit" (S, 430). Having said this Sykes explains that he knows the novel *Helena*

> better than any other by Evelyn because, at his suggestion, I turned the last chapters of it into a radio play for the Third Programme of the BBC, and studying it closely I came to recognize to what heights he had risen as a master of English. The characterization, notably of Constantine, is exquisite, and the use of irony equally so. In the detailed but economic description of Constantine's murder of the Empress Fausta all the horror of ancient Rome comes alive. There are few evocations of Rome and its changing character to equal the one which Evelyn wrote marking Helena's first impression of the city. (S, 430-31)

Father D'Arcy is as disparaging as Sykes about *Helena*, which he considers "perhaps his least successful work." He also dismisses Helena as saint and empress (at least in Waugh's depiction), somehow managing to believe her reduced to a "kindly old lady" (EWHW, 78). Yet another Catholic, Conor Cruise O'Brien, sees no virtue in *Helena*, "a shapeless and sentimental piece of historical fiction about the piety of a British lady of the age of Constantine, epoch of the conversion of the upper class."[7]

None of Waugh's Catholic critics quoted here seems to have noticed that the tones of Waugh's novel allow for a blend of levels of wit and prose style, just as the Church to which he and Helena belong will accept a motley company. This point is made with insight and charity by Malcolm Bradbury, who is one of the "non-Catholic reader[s]" he refers to:

> *Helena* (1950) is of all Waugh's novels the most difficult for the non-Catholic reader to respond to, for Helena exists in a special order of sanctity. Though the preface tells us that the book ("just something to read; in fact a legend") interprets its traditional and historical materials with a novelist's preference for the picturesque over the plausible, it is a novel about faith, Helena being created for a particular task, one of sainthood, and aided by a dream indicating divine intervention. Since Helena's success is foreknown, our attention turns to more incidental aspects of presentation - the excellent social analysis, the remarkable evocation of the life of Constantine's Rome, the ironic references to present-day conditions - and, particularly, to the very explicit delineation of the tolerant, eclectic vein in Waugh's Catholic thought, to which insufficient attention is usually paid.[8]

To a greater extent than any other critic seems to have managed, the non-Catholic Bradbury has understood both the literary power of *Helena* as a Catholic novel and the nature of Waugh's Catholicism. Heath, for example, undermines his own argument that *Helena* is "a forthright statement of the unique nature of Christian religion" (He, 203). Whilst this is partially true, he misses a legitimate opportunity to strengthen his case that Waugh is a

Catholic novelist. For Waugh the unique, but universal, nature of Catholicism is what matters.

Waugh's Helena is every actual and potential Catholic soul, moved from heights to depths and vice versa; bundled around half the world; successful; ignored; forgotten; purposeful. She holds out hope for all. At the close of the novel the triumph of Helena's persistent, practical hope is both paramount and perpetual. "Above all the babble of her age and ours, she makes one blunt assertion. And there alone lies Hope" (H, 159). No wonder *Helena* was Waugh's favourite piece of work,[9] as well as his "MASTERPIECE" (L, 312). It is fitting for a Catholic novelist that his *chef d'oeuvre* should be his most explicitly, joyfully, Catholic novel. And it *is* a masterly piece of work in which principal characters, plot, anachronisms, and Catholicism are artistically integrated to make a perfectly whole novel.

In the course of telling Helena's story, Waugh offers the observant reader clues that suggest her life will end in holy success. For example, even before Helena leaves Britain she discusses Marcias' fate with her father Coel, hoping for her slave-tutor's freedom:

> 'What's going to happen to Marcias?' A remote and rather kindly look came over the King's face.
> 'Marcias?' he said. 'Marcias. I've always been very fond of Marcias. Clever fellow. Wasted as a girl's tutor.'
> 'You used sometimes to say, papa, that you'd free him when my education was finished.'
> 'Did I? Did I say that? I don't think I ever said anything quite as definite as that. Besides, how was I to know your education would be over so soon? There's plenty of good work in Marcias yet.' (H, 34)

There is a piquant irony here, for Helena's real education, her Christian education, has not yet begun. Years later when she meets Marcias again, he is a free man. Shortly after Helena discovers her tutor's freedom, Waugh announces that Helena has been baptised. The completion of her "education" and Marcias' manumission finally coincide.

The newly-married Helena is eager to go with her husband, Constantius Chlorus, to Rome. He responds evasively, but with banal honesty, that "one does not travel direct to Rome" (H, 37). He is literally correct, but behind this simple statement is Waugh's knowledge that both he and Helena reached the faith that Rome represents by roundabout routes.

Years later when Helena's son Constantine is grown, he proudly tells his mother "I'm to be emperor some day." "Pray God not, said Helena" (H, 62). There is a small prophecy of Helena's future in her reaction. Born in a land of many gods, and travelling among people owing allegiance to dozens more, the scrupulous Waugh puts into her mouth the singular, capitalised, Christian word "God."

Questioning Constantius about Mithraism Helena asks clear, provocative questions: "'Yes, *where* did it happen? You say the bull hid in a cave and then the world was created out of his blood. Well, where was the cave when there was no earth?' 'That's a very childish question'" (H, 66). Constantius' rebuke reminds one that Christ expected and fully answered child-like questions. Similarly, Helena's rejection of Marcias' teaching reiterates that Christ called little children and adults with child-like sensibilities to Him:

> 'That is why your religion would never do for me, Marcias. If I ever found a teacher it would have to be one who called little children to him.'
> 'That, alas, is not the spirit of the time. We live in a very old world today. We know too much. We should have to forget everything and be born again to answer your questions.' (H, 84-85)

Helena is unique, and has a particular and necessary place among the rest of Waugh's work. It follows naturally on *Brideshead Revisited*, and especially in its language has a deliberate flavour of the 1920's and 1930's. Helena's favourite word of condemnation is "Bosh!" Cordelia Flyte used it in the same fashion. The old Empress and the young

Cordelia have much in common in their clear, accepting but demanding faithfulness. Helena's discovery of the True Cross serves as an antidote to the failure that ends *Brideshead Revisited*. This novel even contains a remodelled reincarnation of Charles Ryder in Constantius Chlorus: "He was a man unschooled in courtesy; no inherited veil of kindliness hid his small, cold soul" (H, 54). *Helena* is Waugh's supremely Catholic novel, and one that incorporates, with great felicity, his ear for language, his sense of history past and present, and of humour, and his entire commitment to his faith.

"This is a novel" (H, 9), Waugh writes in his Preface to *Helena*. He also says, "The novelist deals with the experiences which excite his imagination. In this case the experience was my desultory reading in History and Archaelogy. The resulting book, of course, is neither History or Archaelogy" (H, 9). To emphasise *Helena's* fictional nature, "wilful, obvious anachronisms are introduced as a literary device" (H, 9). Waugh is, however, writing historically, and he makes no secret of introducing historical events, real and imaginary, into his story overtly and allusively.

> One historian makes Helena an elderly concubine from Drepanum. I contrived the drowned Bithynian as a hint to the knowing that I thought nothing of the credibility of this tale.
>
> There are some other echoes and reflections of this kind scattered about the following pages, but it would be tedious to point them out. They are there to be found out by everyone whom they amuse. (H, 11)

Here Waugh acknowledges openly what seems to be true of all his novels, that for those who choose to play with him, there are games of hide and seek, as well as the multiple pleasures of reading.

Waugh's constant fears that his beloved novel would not be well-received were remarkably prescient, but he was still bitterly disappointed by the critical reception it was

given. He was not, however, far wrong in his own assessment of *Helena*. The novel is a rich but astringent mixture of anachronistically 1920's and 1930's speech--the period of Waugh's brilliant earliest novels; colourful and correct historical detail and geographical description; Church history and politics; and the wickedly observant sense of humour which belongs both to Waugh and to Helena. His running Gibbon joke (H, 77, 158), first used in *Work Suspended*, is aired again here and is not gratuitous. Waugh the historian, whose faith was founded in history, comments unfavourably on Gibbon's person and his view of history. The following extract, which includes the passage Sykes objected to, puts the [G]gibbon into its context in the novel, and is a fine sample of the flavour of Waugh's work here, whilst showing his own ideas about his vocation as a writer, about history, and about "style." It also describes the moment when Helena begins to consider becoming a Christian:

> [Lactantius] appeared on demand when Helena wished to make a show of him, and sometimes at his own fancy when he would pay a call on the ladies as he was doing this afternoon, to remind them, if they seemed to forget it, of his continued existence at their court.... [Lactantius] delighted in writing, in the joinery and embellishment of his sentences, in the conciousness of high rare virtue when every word had been used in its purest and most precise sense, in the kitten games of syntax and rhetoric....[10]
>
> The Christians were not the only cult that flourished in the mild air of Trèves; the city...teemed with mystagogues of one sort and another, and Minervina...had a coterie of them, which Helena deplored....
>
> It was to Gnostic friends that Minervina now referred when she said: 'I shall be glad when we move back to town. I miss my Souls.'[11]
>
> 'You have quite a little colony of your persuasion here in Igal, I think, Lactantius.' [said Helena].
>
> 'Three families for whom your Majesty kindly found cottages when they arrived from Thrace. A priest visits them; I, too, sometimes....'
>
> 'It's funny, nowadays, how much talk there is everywhere about Christians. I don't remember ever hearing of them when I was a girl in Britain.'
>
> 'We have our martyrs there too - before your imperial husband's day of course. We are very proud of Alban....'[12]
>
> 'It needs a special quality to be a martyr - just as it needs a special quality to be a writer. Mine is the humbler rôle, but one must not think it quite valueless.... Suppose that in years to come, when the Church's troubles

> seem to be over, there should come an apostate of my own trade, a false historian, with the mind of Cicero or Tacitus and the soul of an animal,' and he nodded towards the gibbon who fretted his golden chain and chattered for fruit. 'A man like that might make it his business to write down the martyrs and excuse the persecutors. He might be refuted again and again but what he wrote would remain in people's minds when the regulations were quite forgotten. That is what style does - it has the Egyptian secret of the embalmers. It is not to be despised.'
>
> 'Lactantius, dear, don't be so serious. No one despises you. We are only joking. I should certainly never permit you to return East. You're a great pet and everyone here is fond of you....'
>
> With the first chill of autumn the household cumbrously moved to Trèves,...Minervina found the town...agog with the prospect of a visit from a Gnostic of the highest distinction.... He was quite the latest thing in Higher Thought. 'I won't have him here,' said Helena. 'And that's flat....'
>
> But when at last the servant arrived he did not eschew the hospitality of the second best house in Trèves [Minervina's].... 'You'll come and hear him speak, won't you?' said Minervina.... Helena consented....
>
> 'All things are double one against another,' said Marcius.... 'So the things of error come; then the Gnosis intervenes. Dosithus knew himself not to be the Standing One, acknowledged his error, and in his knowledge was made one with the mensual twenty-nine, and with Helena, the thirtieth half-one' ('Not this Helena,' thought Helena) - 'who is both mother and bride of Adam the primal.'
>
> ...Helena felt something shockingly unsuitable to the occasion take shape deep within herself and irresistibly rise;...Helena began to giggle....
>
> That evening Helena sent for Lactantius and said: 'I went to the lecture this afternoon. I found I knew the man quite well. He used to belong to my father in Britain. He's put on a lot of weight since then. I couldn't understand a word he said. It's all bosh, isn't it?'
>
> 'All complete bosh, your Majesty.'
>
> 'So I supposed. Just wanted to make sure. Tell me, Lactantius, this god of yours. If I asked you when and where he could be seen, what would you say?' (H, 78-85)

What Lactantius says is as firmly historically fixed as the example Waugh gave to Lady Diana Cooper--a Second World War desert battle: "as a man he died two hundred and seventy eight years ago in the town now called Aelia Capitolina in Palestine" (H, 85). Helena also learns from Lactantius of something vital to Waugh, the existence of "the living memory of the Church," which remains true and unchanged whilst growing, so different from the ever-changing mass of merely living and dying humanity outside the Church. These rocks of

Helena's faith are Waugh's, too, and in describing Helena's fidelity he writes his own Credo. He and Helena may laugh at the "Souls," but they offer an intimate view of their own Catholic souls. For *Helena* is more than another of Waugh's Catholic novels; though fictional, it is a more fervent account of his faith than the article "Converted to Rome" written twenty years earlier. Remarkably, in writing *Helena*, Waugh takes his readers, at least those who are willing to enter, into his confidence and his Catholic conscience as never before.

CHAPTER V

The Loved One and *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*:

Obsessions and Souls

"I am entirely obsessed by Forest Lawns [sic] and plan a long short story about it," wrote Evelyn Waugh to A.D. Peters in March, 1947 (L, 247). His obsession produced *The Loved One* (1948). Obsessions of a very different order resulted in the production of *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* (1957), a piece of work almost as autobiographical as *A Little Learning* (1964). It is, therefore, first of all obsession which brings together this apparently ill-assorted pair of novels. The two obsessions were of a very different order. Forest Lawn filled Waugh with appalled delight, whereas *Pinfold* is a reworked account of Waugh's very real, though hallucinatory, sufferings, when drug-induced, invisible voices obsessed and tormented him, as they did Pinfold. It is still, however, a comic novel. In September, 1956, the recovered Waugh wrote to Anne Fleming, "The mad book is going to be very funny, I believe" (L, 475). These two novels also serve to show the reader the opposite outer limits of Waugh's work. At one end of the spectrum, *The Loved One* is written with essentially disinterested joyous horror. *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* is a very much interested, but controlled observation and depiction of the horrors, as frightening as it is funny.

Writing *The Loved One*, Waugh is a classic satirist, standing above and beyond the target of his satire. *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* is quite another matter. It may have satiric moments, but few critics view it as a satirical piece of work. Donat O'Donnell notes an absence of satire: "The first, and probably the best, chapter in this short book is called Portrait of the Artist in Middle Age. The portrait it presents of Mr. Pinfold seems to be in fact a portrait of Mr. Waugh, painted by no satiric or malevolent hand" (CH, 380). James F.

Carens, whose book is entitled *The Satiric Art of Evelyn Waugh*, mentions *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* only four times, and briefly. He refers to it as an "admittedly autobiographical work."[1] The word "satire" in any of its forms, does not appear in the reviews of *Pinfold* in Martin Stannard's *Critical Heritage*. In his review, Philip Toynbee finds *Pinfold* difficult to characterise, but satire is not one of the possibilities he considers. Waugh "has never written a book in the least like this one before. Fictionalised autobiography? Nightmare? An essay in the macabre?" (CH, 380). Whether autobiography and satire are mutually exclusive is worth pondering, but not here.

The Loved One is much easier to classify, as Cyril Connolly confirms:

> Mr. Waugh, in fact, has written a Swiftian satire on the burial customs of Southern California, and his irony need not be taken to reflect on America as a whole. But since Southern California is one of the most American places, with a society some ten years ahead of the rest of the country in a materialist sense, its burial customs are extremely important, for they reveal in all their empty enormity the American conception of death, and the elaborate effort made by those who most worship comfort, beauty and life to euphemize that stark object which is of all the most ill-favoured and unreassuring. In its attitude to death, and to death's stand-in, failure, Mr. Waugh exposes a materialist society at its weakest spot, as would Swift or Donne were they alive today.
>
> I mention Swift and Donne because Evelyn Waugh has affinities with them rather than with the humorists to which he is so often compared. (CH, 299-300)

John Woodburn extends the notion of Waugh as a satirist:

> As a piece of writing it is nearly faultless; as satire it is an act of devastation, an angry, important, moral effort that does not fail. 'The Loved One' is not outrageous but outraged; sickened but not sickening; its macabre humor is the shocked, protective laughter of the civilized man confronted with the unassimilable horror that permits no other means of rejection. (CH, 304)

And an anonymous reviewer for *The Times Literary Supplement* sees Waugh's satire as religious, and connects *The Loved One* with earlier novels: "...Mr. Waugh is the author of a

series of satires so impregnated with religious rage that we are compelled to a belief in his religious attitude. It is a negative approach with a positive result. Mr. Waugh upbraids the materialists with creative passion" (CH, 305).

In his earlier work Waugh depicted circumstances which were not entirely strange to him. Like Jane Austen he observed and commented from the inside on a world not unlike the one he inhabited. Although Heath contends, in *A Picturesque Prison*, that there is, in *The Loved One*, a circumstantial relation to his earlier novels, this is not so. The world of the Hollywood cemetery, populated by embalmers, cremators and corpse cosmeticians is as alien to Waugh as Mars. His earlier novels were set in a world entirely familiar to him. Here, not only can he afford to satirise from the outside, he must. With *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*, Pinfold/Waugh is his own protagonist, in his own world, battling aural hallucinatory obsessions that only he hears.

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For Waugh, Whispering Glades né Forest Lawn is fantasy made real before his eyes. He looks and writes as an amazed foreigner, and his Catholicism is very subtly introduced into the text of *The Loved One*, which is rich with perverse or, at best, cult religion and religiosity. This is clear from the text itself, and has been observed by a wide variety of critics. For example, Gene D. Phillips points out:

> [Aimée's] first name was given to her by her father in honor of the American evangelist Aimée Semple McPherson, whom Waugh had already satirized in the character of Mrs. Melrose Ape in *Vile Bodies*. Aimée's father, it seems, was a strong adherent of the "Four Square Gospel" cult and therefore an admirer of Miss McPherson. (P, 83)

The Loved One has, superficially, an almost farcical story. Dennis Barlow, sometime member of the R.A.F. and a failing poet, comes to Los Angeles to work as a movie writer. His contract rapidly expires, and to earn a living he becomes an animal undertaker and oven operator at the Happier Hunting Grounds. This is modelled on Whispering Glades, itself a parody, if that is possible, of the real institution where the sole business is the preparation of bodies for burial or cremation. Dennis admires the refinements of Whispering Glades. He also admires one of the cosmeticians there, Aimée Thanatogenos. He woos her with poetry stolen from successful but dead poets. However, Aimée is more attracted to Mr. Joyboy, the Senior Mortician. Still, she is briefly engaged to Dennis. Mr. Joyboy seems about to triumph, for he is to marry Aimée. Unfortunately Aimée becomes disillusioned with both men and desperately seeks the advice of an agony columnist, the Guru Brahmin, in reality a Mr. Slump. He drunkenly suggests, over the telephone, that she "go take a high jump" (LO, 115) to solve her problems. Aimée takes him at his word, but modifies the method: she gives herself a lethal injection of cyanide. Dennis and Mr. Joyboy dispose of her corpse by cremating her in the oven at the Happier Hunting Grounds. Unfazed by either Aimée's lovelorn state, or her death, Dennis becomes a Non-Sectarian Minister. He wishes to return to England, and to finance his trip, he blackmails Mr. Joyboy. Dennis threatens to tell the founder of Whispering Glades, Dr. Kenworthy, the Dreamer, about Mr. Joyboy's part in Aimée's death.

Waugh's text is, from the very first page, replete with allusions to Catholicism. There are also as many references to an astonishing variety of 'faiths.' "In that kindly light the stained and blistered paint of the bungalow and the plot of weeds between the veranda and the dry water-hole lost their extreme shabbiness...." At once, for the knowing reader,

Cardinal Newman makes his presence felt, as Waugh borrows words from the Cardinal's famous hymn "Lead, kindly light." Almost immediately afterwards, Sir Francis Hinsley, Dennis's host and himself failing in the movies, mutters inconsequentially. He is baffled "by Kierkegaard, Kafka, Connolly,"--a Protestant theologian, and two 'modern' and godless writers. "I couldn't make any sense of them" (LO, 7-8). He speaks again, only a few moments later, and, once more, his reference is essentially Catholic. "If exclusion from British society can be counted as martyrdom, prepare for the palm and the halo" (LO, 14). Such a comment becomes painfully ironic when, very shortly, Hinsley commits, in Catholic terms, the supreme sin and hangs/martyrs himself. One is almost reminded of Graham Greene's Scobie in *The Heart of the Matter* (1948).

Waugh's choice of Hinsley's surname, and the fact that Sir Francis has a Catholic turn of mind, is no accident. Arthur Hinsley (1865-1943) was Archbishop of Westminster from 1935 to 1937, when he was made a Cardinal. He founded the "Sword of the Spirit," movement in 1940, supported by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and the Moderator of the Free Churches.[2] Francis Hinsley was fired from his job at Megalopolitan Studios and replaced by Lorenzo Medici. Given the origin of Hinsley's name, and the high Catholic rank of its first possessor, there is a nice irony in that the original Lorenzo di Medici was excommunicated by Pope Sixtus IV. Even more importantly Hinsley, as Archbishop-elect, undertook to expedite the annulment of Waugh's first marriage (S, 215).

Much more frivolously than when Hinsley speaks, but still with broad Christian, and then narrower Catholic overtones, a client of the Happier Hunting Grounds introduces herself: "This is *Theodora* [my emphasis] Heinkel, Mrs Walter Heinkel, of 207 *Via Dolorosa* [my emphasis], Bel Air" (LO, 17). When Dennis Barlow has dealt with her deceased Sealyham he

has time to reflect on his employment. "For the first time he knew what it was to 'explore an avenue'; his way was narrow but it was dignified and umbrageous and it led to limitless distances" (LO, 23). Dennis, in his own peculiar fashion, is on the strait and narrow way to a bizarre version of Paradise. Already he has moments of vision. After committing "the ashes of a tabby-cat to the slip-stream over Sunset Boulevard" (LO, 23), he experiences a sense of joy: "There at the quiet limit of the world he experienced a tranquil joy such as he had known only once before, one glorious early Eastertide when, honourably lamed in a house-match, he had lain in bed and heard below the sanatorium windows the school marching out for a field-day" (LO, 23). Easter was, for Waugh, as a Catholic, the best time of the year; he loathed Christmas. He goes on to describe Dennis's first visit to Whispering Glades thus: "As a missionary priest making his first pilgrimage to the Vatican, as a paramount chief of equatorial Africa mounting the Eiffel Tower, Dennis Barlow, poet and pets' mortician, drove through the golden gates" (LO, 34). When, later, Dennis returns to Whispering Glades as a customer, to organise the disposition of Sir Francis Hinsley, he is met by a Mortuary Hostess who requires information: "'Was your Loved one of any special religion?' 'An agnostic.' 'We have two non-sectarian churches in the Park and a number of non-sectarian pastors. Jews and Catholics seem to prefer to make their own arrangements'" (LO, 38). At the time of the funeral itself Waugh's opinion of Hollywood's death ceremonies is made clear: Sir Ambrose Abercrombie, famous "ham" actor, with the help of other prominent Englishmen, composed the order of service. "Liturgy in Hollywood is the concern of the Stage rather than the Clergy" (LO, 51). In another example there is the description of Aimée Thanatogenos, as she goes about her work, preparing a "loved one's" features for

display. "Aimée worked like a nun, intently, severely, methodically" (LO, 57). All nuns are not Catholic, but they are in Waugh's world of simile.

Dennis Barlow is enthralled by Whispering Glades. An account of its foundation is provided by Dr. Kenworthy, whose idea the whole business was. "The porch was equipped with an apparatus by which at will a lecture might be switched on to explain the peculiarities of the place" (LO, 63). Dennis absorbs the information with the fascination of a rabbit fixed by a stoat:

> "Why," asked Dr Kenworthy, "do you call it St. Peter - without-the-walls?" and they told him that it was because in the old days the city wall had stood between it and the business centre. "*My* church," said Dr Kenworthy, "shall have no walls." And so you see it today full of God's sunshine and fresh air, bird-song and flowers.... (LO, 64)

This passage may be both interestingly and illuminatingly compared with one from the later *Helena*, a novel of hope and belief, rather than a chronicle of cynical decay.

> 'Must there always be a wall, Chlorus?.. sometimes I wonder won't Rome ever go beyond the wall?... Instead of the barbarian breaking in, might The City one day break out?..couldn't the wall be at the limits of the world and all men, civilized and barbarian, have a place in The City?' (H, 39-40)

For the Dreamer, the city, with a very small c, is the business centre. For Helena, though the idea is not yet clear in her mind, The City is the City of God. The Dreamer is, for Waugh, and would be even for the relatively generous Helena, the ultimate barbarian whom both would probably hope to exclude from The City.

The vulgarity of the Dreamer's ideas is echoed, and explained, in appropriately coarse language, again filled with religious touches, by the coxswain who ferries Dennis and other visitors to the Lake Isle of Innisfree:

> It certainly is a poetic place to be planted in. Costs round about a thousand bucks. The poeticest place in the whole darn park. I was here when they made it. They figured the Irish are just naturally poetic and won't pay that

> much for plantings. Besides they've got a low-down kind of cemetery of their own downtown, being Catholic. It's mostly the good-style Jews we get here. They appreciate the privacy. (LO, 66-67)

Once on the Isle, Dennis waits for Aimée to appear. Frederick Stopp describes the scene:

> And then, as if in answer to this threefold evocation of poetry without pain, the flesh without the kernel, hives without bees, peaches without a stone,..there appears again his 'sole Eve in a bustling Eden,' his decadent, Aimée Thanatogenos, communing with herself on the twin themes of Art and Death. As junior cosmetician in Whispering Glades, her role is to demonstrate the triumph of Art *over* Death, as the hives and the peaches and the whole settled desert of Southern California demonstrate the triumph of Art over Nature. Dennis recognizes in her the living embodiment of Whispering Glades. For him she is 'Aimée,' the beloved and the loved one; she is 'Thanatogenos,' born of death and born to die. (St, 146)

Aimée's "true home" is a pseudo-religious mortuary/graveyard. Her name is death, and a fake religion determines her fate. "'...Dad lost his money in religion so I had to learn a trade.' 'He lost his money in religion?' 'Yes, the Four Square Gospel'" (LO, 72-73). To learn a trade, to work at Whispering Glades, and to die, all this was Aimée's "new manifest destiny" (LO, 88). The very idea of manifest destiny is a bizarre nineteenth-century American version of a providential mission. According to John L. O'Sullivan, "Our manifest destiny is to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions."[3] To achieve *her* "manifest destiny," Aimée was to marry Mr. Joyboy and found, presumably, a mortuarial dynasty, the beginning of "multiplying millions" to fulfil the Dreamer's vision of "overspreading" memorial gardens, creeping noisily and grotesquely across the continent, absorbing and distorting European culture, poetry, art and religion as they progressed. The Joyboy/Thanatogenos wedding was to have been a masterpiece of morbid "interfaith" ceremonial. "A date was fixed for the wedding at the University Church. Mr Joyboy had been reared a Baptist and the minister who buried the Baptist dead gladly offered his services" (LO, 106).

Instead, Aimée's proper "manifest destiny" was suicide by injection, both hilarious, given her career, and horrific, given the so-recent Nazi use of cyanide-derived chemicals to destroy millions. Her spiritual advisor, the Guru Brahmin, the drunken and about-to-be unemployed Mr. Slump, advises her about her fate, over the telephone. For the first time in his advice-giving career, and as his swan-song, he advises her honestly, if brutally:

> 'I told her to take a high jump.'
> 'We heard.'
> 'Wasn't I right?'
> 'You know best, brother.'
> 'Well, for Christ's sake, with a name like that?' (LO, 115)

Slump's "for Christ's sake" is both bitterly twisted and an indication that he is one of Waugh's "bad" characters who willingly takes the Lord's name in vain, but he is at least sufficiently well-educated to understand Aimée's name.

His effect on Aimée is instantaneous and irrevocable. It produces a bathetic version of tragedy, told by Waugh in heroic language.

> Her mind was quite free from anxiety. Somehow, somewhere in the blank black hours she had found counsel; she had communed perhaps with the spirits of her ancestors, the impious and haunted race who had deserted the altars of the old Gods, had taken ship and wondered, driven by the pursuing furies through the mean streets and among what barbarous tongues. (LO, 116)

Having abandoned the honest "altars of the old Gods," Aimée's ancestors were punished. Their sufferings have done nothing to mitigate Aimée's, except that she is too crudely made to grasp the full hideousness of her fate. She, like her ancestors, wanders the mean streets of Los Angeles, especially in Mr. Joyboy's drab and dusty suburb. She is still subjected to barbarous tongues, epitomised by Mrs. Joyboy's graceless babble. But even this leaves her. "The protagonists, Dennis and Mr Joyboy, were quite forgotten. The matter was between

herself and the deity she served" (LO, 117). Aimée sacrifices herself on the phoney, hygienic altar of a rolled-gold calf.

Meanwhile, work for Dennis at the Happier Hunting Grounds becomes less satisfying, and as business is bad, less secure. However, one of the rare ceremonious funerals at the Happier Hunting Ground offers Dennis the chance of a new career and Waugh the opportunity to revel in lunatic-fringe religious practices, for animals and for humans:

> There was a funeral with full honours that morning, the first for a month. In the presence of a dozen mourners the coffin of an Alsatian was lowered into the flower-lined tomb. The Reverend Errol Bartholomew read the service.
>
> 'Dog that is born of bitch hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery. He cometh up, and is cut down like a flower; he fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay....'
>
> Later in the office as he gave Mr Bartholomew his cheque, Dennis said: 'Tell me, how does one become a non-sectarian clergyman?'
>
> 'One has the Call.'
>
> 'Yes, of course; but after the Call, what is the process? I mean is there a non-sectarian bishop who ordains you?'
>
> 'Certainly not. Anyone who has received the Call has no need for human intervention.'
>
> 'You just say one day "I am a non-sectarian clergyman" and set up shop?'
>
> 'There is considerable outlay. You need buildings. But the banks are usually ready to help. Then of course, what one aims at is a radio congregation.'
>
> 'A friend of mine has the Call, Mr Bartholomew.'
>
> 'Well, I should advise him to think twice about answering it. The competition gets hotter every year, especially in Los Angeles. Some of the recent non-sectarians stop at nothing - not even at psychiatry and table-turning.'
>
> 'That's bad.'
>
> 'It is entirely without scriptural authority.'
>
> 'My friend was thinking of making a speciality of funeral work. He has connexions.'
>
> 'Chicken feed, Mr Barlow. There is more to be made in weddings and christenings.'
>
> 'My friend doesn't feel quite the same about weddings and christenings. What he needs is Class. You would say, would you not, that a non-sectarian clergyman was the social equal of an embalmer?'

> 'I certainly would, Mr Barlow. There is a very deep respect in the American heart for ministers of religion.' (LO, 96-97)

Caught up in the excitement of his new career, Dennis makes detailed plans for his sermons and his vestments as he half-listens to Aimée as they bicker about their relationship and about Mr. Joyboy:

> I have a future in the Non-sectarian Church. I expect to be head chaplain at Whispering Glades when Mr Joyboy is still swilling out corpses. I have the makings of a great preacher - something in the metaphysical seventeenth-century manner, appealing to the intellect rather than to crude emotion. Something Laudian - ceremonious, verbose, ingenious, and doctrinally quite free of prejudice. I have been thinking a good deal about my costume; full sleeves, I think... (LO, 110)

Both his words and his garb will be a flashy, superficial pastiche--pure, or perhaps more properly, impure Hollywood--all glittering gimcrack surface and no substance. Dennis's, and Waugh's, choice of the word "costume" is very telling. The whole episode reminds one of a more sophisticated (in the worst sense of the word) version of "A BRAND FROM THE BURNING: A FILM BASED ON THE LIFE OF JOHN WESLEY" as it was portrayed in *Vile Bodies*.

However, nothing can stop Dennis now. He proclaims himself a fully, and flamboyantly, qualified non-sectarian minister:

> *Squadron Leader the Rev. Dennis Barlow begs to announce that he is shortly starting business at 1154 Arbuckle Avenue, Los Angeles. All non-sectarian services expeditiously conducted at competitive prices. Funerals a speciality. Panegyrics in prose or poetry. Confessions heard in strict confidence.* (LO, 122)

Ambrose Abercrombie is appalled. For him, who cares little for any religion, this is a gross and grotesque perversion. Worse, it is *unEnglish*, a dreadful mistake based on Dennis's huge misconception of religion in America. Abercrombie prefers his own triter misconception, almost as sham as Dennis's, of religion in England:

> I didn't like it when you started to work here [the Happier Hunting Ground]. Told you so frankly at the time. But at least this is a more or less private concern. But religion's quite another matter. I expect you're thinking of some pleasant country rectory at home. Religion's not like that here. Take it from me, I know the place. (LO, 123)

There is, however, no stopping Dennis, and in Waugh's assessment--far more profound than Abercrombie's--he is dangerous. Abercrombie may have a debased view of religion, but at least he has some small semblence of a social conscience and standards, in that he believes England and the English are good and proper. His basis for moral judgement may be trivial in the extreme, but at least he has shreds of belief and a vestigial moral conscience. Dennis has absolutely none of these. He had a tiny capacity to love--he had a heart--but he has entirely lost it.

> On the last evening in Los Angeles Dennis knew he was a favourite of Fortune. Others, better men than he, had foundered here and perished. The strand was littered with their bones. He was leaving not only unravished but enriched. He was adding his bit to the wreckage, something that had long irked him, his young heart, and was carrying back instead the artist's load, a great, shapeless chunk of experience; bearing it home to his ancient and comfortless shore; to work on it hard and long, for God knew how long. (LO, 127)

The most frequently proposed view of *The Loved One* is that it is, besides being a satire on the American way of death, a novel about art and artists. As Heath, for example, succinctly puts it "Whispering Glades is more than a shrine in the religion of consolation. It is also a gallery and school of its art" (He, 192). He goes on to offer the widely held view of Dennis, real artist, at the end of the novel: "In his 'moment of vision' Dennis sees that man-centred art is immature and ephemeral. No longer an adolescent Orpheus, he rejects the false father and the false bride of transient art, and he *begins* to discover something that 'only he' can find: his vocation as a genuine artist" (He, 196-97). Aimée is an artist of sorts. So is Mr. Joyboy. So is Dennis Barlow, plagiarising poet. But all are either debasers of art, as

Dennis is, or their talent lies in a field that is scarcely among the fine arts, so the words art and artist become defiled. More probably, *The Loved One* is about lost souls, most particularly Dennis's. The "young heart" that he leaves in the wreckage is more than the broken heart of a lover. It represents his more important soul.

Abercrombie, a better man than Dennis, has "foundered" in Los Angeles. Francis Hinsley, a man who did attempt to earn his living honestly, and who generously played host to Dennis, has perished. Neither succumbed entirely to materialism, and both retained tiny crumbs of faith and charity. Even Aimée's suicide is an act of perverse morality. Dennis has become materialism incarnate. Nothing now matters except money. He has become a sociopath, without conscience, without heart, without anything that a whole human being would recognise as feelings. He is a moral suicide who, not realising this, can only be amoral. He is so dangerous, so utterly conscience-free, without self-knowledge or charity, that it is difficult to know whether Waugh's final words--"for God knew how long"--are ironic or fearful. But of course, Waugh's God could take on and defeat even Dennis Barlow, so perhaps Waugh's phrase is actually that of a faithfully hopeful Catholic, trusting in God's knowledge, even as Dennis passes the bounds of truly human behaviour.

Olivia Manning, writing as R.D. Smith, in her review of *The Loved One*, condemns Dennis, but not so severely as Waugh. She offers, however, no scrap of hope of salvation:

> His phoneyness is even more clearly shown by his attitude to art. He reads popular anthologies as 'a drug, specific big magic' and this, we are supposed to believe, because 'artists are by nature versatile and precise.' On seeing his hanging friend's distorted face he feels 'pleasantly exhilarated and full of curiosity' *because* this is 'the kind of thing to be expected in the world he knew' (which had given him six literary prizes and a cushy job as Air Priority Officer). (CH, 311)

A less scrupulous reader might perhaps feel rather pleased that Dennis has not married Aimée, and that he has not met the sad fate of Francis Hinsley. The same reader might also be relieved that the dishonest Mr. Joyboy has got his comeuppance. Dennis has played the game of fakery and materialism with the greatest experts in the world, and won. Only later does the reader grasp Waugh's viewpoint: the cost of Dennis's victory is the price of his soul. Waugh clearly makes this point more than once. Dennis is intrigued rather than compassionate when he discovers the kind Hinsley's hanging body; he is a gross plagiarist who takes advantage of Aimée's ignorance and credulity; like Whispering Glades and its founder, Dr. Kenworthy, he makes or plans to make money out of bogus religion. Waugh judges Dennis as only someone with rock-solid Catholic faith may dare to. And he offers God as Dennis's only possible hope of redemption.

Edmund Wilson provides further evidence that *The Loved One* is a Catholic novel by a Catholic novelist. For him it was even more a "Catholic tract"[4] than *Brideshead Revisited*, and his criticism is vituperatively personal rather than literary:

> In connection with Mr. Waugh's Catholicism, it suggests one obvious criticism that nobody, I think, has made. *The Loved One* is a farcical satire on those deluxe California cemeteries that attempt to render death less unpleasant by exploiting all the resources of landscape-gardening and Hollywood mummery. To the non-religious reader, however, the patrons and proprietors of Whispering Glades seem more sensible and less absurd than the priest-guided Evelyn Waugh. What the former are trying to do is, after all, merely to gloss over physical death with smooth lawns and soothing rites; but, for the Catholic, the fact of death is not faced at all: he is solaced with the fantasy of another world in which everyone who has died in the flesh is somehow supposed to be still alive and in which it is supposed to be possible to help souls to advance themselves by buying candles to burn in churches. The trappings invented for this other world by imaginative believers in the Christian myth - since they need not meet the requirements of reality - beat anything concocted by Whispering Glades.[5]

However, Wilson appears not to have noticed that the afterlife figures prominently in the services of the Happier Hunting Ground. The Heinkels are sent a card with this message: "Your little Arthur is thinking of you in heaven and wagging his tail" (LO, 20). Maliciously, Dennis sends this message to Mr. Joyboy: "Your little Aimée is wagging her tail in heaven tonight, and thinking of you" (LO, 127). Each deprived pet owner receives such notices on the anniversary of the death of the departed animal. Wilson's tirade is gently if not absolutely accurately answered by John Farrelly: "It is true that Mr. Waugh is a convert to the Roman Catholic Church but he doesn't find it necessary in his book to invoke dogma or to appeal to any specific religious belief to condemn a morbid preoccupation with physical dissolution in death" (CH, 317).

On January 2, 1948, Waugh wrote to Cyril Connolly "seeking publication in *Horizon* with the confidence that its readers were tough stuff." He explained *The Loved One* thus:

> The ideas I had in mind in writing were: 1st & and [sic] quite predominantly over-excitement with the scene of Forest Lawn. 2nd the Anglo-American impasse - 'never the twain shall meet,' 3rd there is no such thing as an American. They are all exiles, transplanted & doomed to sterility. The ancestral gods they haved abjured get them in the end. I tried to indicate that in Aimée's last hours. 4th the European raiders who come for home with them. 5th Memento mori, old style, not specifically Californian. (L, 265-66)

Waugh's fifth reason, *memento mori*, makes plain yet again that *The Loved One* is a Catholic novel written by a Catholic author. Few Protestants or non-believers are as aware of the fact of their own deaths as are Catholics, hoping always to be in a state of grace when the moment comes, and therefore, perpetually reminded of their ends. Waugh's explanatory list of *raisons d'être* for *The Loved One* tends not to support the idea that this novel is primarily about art.

****

Gilbert Pinfold, feeling old and ill, and very much a Catholic, is brought so low, in *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*, that he frequently cares not at all about being in a state of grace. He suffers physically, mentally, and as an artist. In fact, one might see Waugh's novel as an account of Pinfold's disgrace, both spiritual and temporal, and his eventual redemption.

If *The Loved One* is a wondrous, if ultimately solemn tale of alien madnesses observed with a very Catholic, as well as a very English eye, *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* is a chronicle of real madness experienced. However, underlying the alcohol- and drug-induced hallucinations suffered by both Waugh and Pinfold, there exists an even more serious, and in a sense, life-threatening malaise--the state of the Catholic Church. As will become evident, Waugh's unease is transmitted to Pinfold, who finds less and less comfort in his Church.

Long before the Second Vatican Council began its work on January 25, 1959, major changes had begun in the Church. For Waugh the most significant of these were in the liturgy. But he also began to find himself at painful odds with some members of the clergy:

Easter 1956

> I went to Downside on the Wednesday of Holy Week and stayed until after the High Mass of Easter.... Father Illtyd Trethowan, a bright, youngish philosopher, gave a series of conferences which were outstanding compared with any I have heard at Downside. I found myself in violent disagreement with almost all he said and resentful of the new liturgy.

Waugh also notes the changes he found so abhorrent:

> On Thursday, instead of the morning Mass, mandatum, tenebrae and night vigil at the altar of repose, there was an afternoon Mass with the mandatum interpolated after the gospel and the altar of repose emptied at midnight.[6] On Friday, instead of the Mass of the Presanctified, stations of the Cross and

> tenebrae, an afternoon adoration of the cross and general communion. On Saturday nothing (except the conferences) all day until the Easter vigil at 10:30 in the same form we had suffered the last two years. (D, 758)

The liturgy was changing, and for both clergy and laity, new developments in the Church sometimes led either to disobedience or defection. The latter, most particularly distressing to Waugh, had begun to happen among his own friends and acquaintances. His faith in God was not shaken, but his view of the body of the Church was:

> Tuesday 10 January 1956
>
> I was told at Mells by Diana that Pandora Jones, who brought her husband into the Church, is separated from him and being divorced. The Clifford girls are nothing to me but this lapse of the last of them depresses me. Every week it seems I hear of a desertion. I used to see the Church as peculiar people bound by human and divine loyalties. At times it seems a nondescript crowd with comings and goings haphazard. Clarissa's apostasy was the sharpest wound of course.[7] (D, 751)

At least as early as the beginning of 1956 Waugh began to feel hurt by what was happening in and to his Church.[8] If one takes Waugh's clearly expressed state of mind about the state of the Church in 1956 into account, Dom Hubert van Zeller's explanation of Waugh's attitude to a changing Church is already relevant to the Waugh who wrote *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*. Dom van Zeller writes:

> The *aggiornamentò* spelled for him a repudiation of the Church's inflexibility. The new freedoms meant to him a negation rather than an affirmation. He had come to know the Church which was built upon a rock, and now he saw the rock moving out to sea. It was especially in the matter of liturgy, as English-speaking Catholics soon learned, that he felt himself to be adrift. He had expected permanence in the use of Latin for the Mass, in an established ceremonial, and suddenly he was presented with what threatened to be a free-for-all.[9]

Dom van Zeller's image of the rock is a powerful one, but one that resounds with hideous incongruity when one reads, with it in mind, Waugh's picture of "Mr. Pinfold burrow[ing] ever deeper into the rock" (OGP, 13). For although Pinfold burrows for safety into the rock

of his faith, later the rock will either crush him, or vomit him out like a volcano, rather than protect him. And at the end, Pinfold has to come to terms with the fact that his religion alone cannot save him: he needs, too, the aid of his wife and his work. Previously his faith had enfolded all those. Now it becomes almost an additional burden to be borne.

It is not that Waugh, in his latter years, ceased to be a Catholic novelist. Far from it. But, as the Church was altered by "renewal," the comfort of his Catholicism gave way to a sense that he must adhere to his beliefs almost penitentially. The spiritual joy that had informed the amusing and sometimes biting *Helena*, the joy of spirit with which *The Loved One*, *Put Out More Flags*, *Black Mischief* and *Decline and Fall* are infused, and which allowed his beliefs to be a smoothly intrinsic part of his language and style, vanished. They were replaced, in a series of avowedly Catholic novels, by the anguish of a radical Catholic.

Certainly *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*, published in 1957, was written before the declarations of the Second Vatican Council were made public in 1962. It was written even before the progenitor of Vatican II, Pope John XXIII, was elected in 1958. However, the ideas of Vatican II did not spring fully-formed into being only in 1962. There had long been movings and shakings in the Church. Waugh's 1956 diary entries quoted earlier prove that a Catholic as informed and committed as he was could not but be fully aware of them, even if he chose, like Pinfold, to burrow "into the rock." He could protect neither his head nor his heart, as an intellectual Catholic who had still made the leap of faith. Christopher Sykes confirms this view of Waugh's opinions about Church change, and also shows that they existed long before *Pinfold* was conceived or Waugh became ill. "Easter fell on 28 March in 1948 and on the 24th Evelyn went to Downside for the Holy Week retreat and to attend the incomparably beautiful Holy Week Services in one of the last years when they were

performed in all their majesty and poetry" (S, 433). Sykes goes on to say, speaking of the late 1940's and early 1950's, "The Roman Catholic Church was in some disarray, little compared to the disarray which was to follow" (S, 450). This sentence appears between Sykes' references to Waugh and his wife going to the United States in "the middle of October 1950" (S, 449) and to a visit Sykes and Waugh paid to Rome and Israel on "about 20 January 1951" (S, 452). Consequently it is perfectly reasonable to state that *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* is, besides being an account of Waugh's physical and psychological sufferings, an expression of his grief and pain at what Sykes calls the "disarray" of the Church.

Given that Waugh's own mental illness resulted largely from misused drugs, it is not surprising, in so autobiographical a novel, that Pinfold's sickness has the same cause. However, in both cases it is tempting to see at least an incidental symbolic power in the drugs and a connection, by analogy, with the Church. Properly used, Waugh's and Pinfold's drugs were designed to promote physical health, cure. Improperly used, so with their curative possibilities perverted, they became poison. Until recently the Church had been for both Waugh and Pinfold a source of spiritual health and strength. Perverted, in Waugh's mind, by the reformers, the Church ceased to uphold and fortify and became almost a poison to the soul. Again Waugh has transmitted his state of mind to Pinfold. The shield of their faith has, to alter the image, become a sword to wound them; to slash open their minds, made vulnerable by drugs, and let in the powers of sin and the Devil. For it is frequently with the words of Roman Catholic faith that the voices torture Waugh and Pinfold.

One should, however, note other sources of the agony described in *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*:

> What rise to the surface of Mr Pinfold's mind are images from Hollywood and the station bookstall: the mutiny on the Man of War, the

> scene of torture in the Captain's cabin 'which might have come straight from the kind of pseudo-American thriller he most abhorred'....the writer is vulnerable to exactly those powers on which he relies as an artist, especially if, like Mr Pinfold, he relies on them not just in his art, but also in his life. (Li, 226-27)

Clearly what Littlewood has to say about Pinfold may equally well be applied to his *alter ego*, Waugh. The voices accuse Pinfold of snobbery, sodomy, of being a drunkard, common and a coward.

Very disturbingly, the anti-Semitism of versions of Catholicism from the Inquisition to the Dreyfus affair and beyond is suddenly unleashed against him.

> 'He's a Jew.'
> 'Is he? Are you sure? I never heard that.'
> 'Of course he is. He came to Lychpole in 1937 with the German refugees. He was called Peinfeld then.'
> 'We're out for Peinfeld's blood,' said the pleasant voice. 'We want to beat Hell out of him.'
> 'You don't really mind, do you, sir.' said Fosker, 'if we beat Hell out of him.'
> 'What's wrong with the fellow particularly?'
> 'He's got a dozen pair of shoes in his little hut, all beautifully polished on wooden trees.'
> 'He sits at the Captain's table.'
> 'He's taken the only bathroom near our cabin. I tried to use it tonight and the steward said it was private, for Mr Pinfold.'
> 'Mr Peinfeld.'
> 'I hate him. I hate him. I hate him. I hate him. I hate him,' said Fosker. 'I've got my own score to settle with him for what he did to Hill.'
> 'That farmer who shot himself?'
> 'Hill was a decent old-fashioned yeoman. The salt of the country. Then this filthy Jew came and bought up the property. The Hills had farmed it for generations. They were thrown out. That's why Hill hanged himself.' (OGP, 70)

This scene is both altered and reinforced a few moments later when the voices cease to accuse Pinfold of being a Jew and instead castigate him for his destructive Protestantism:

> Mr Pinfold typified the decline of England, of rural England in particular. He was a reincarnation (Mr Pinfold, not they, drew the analogy) of the 'new men' of the Tudor period who had despoiled the Church and the peasantry.

> His religious profession was humbug, assumed in order to ingratiate himself with the aristocracy. Mr Pinfold was a sodomite. Mr Pinfold must be chastened and chastised. (OGP, 72)

Pinfold's very name--according to *OED*, a pinfold is a pound or fold for either legitimately owned, or stray, cattle or sheep, and, as a verb, it means to gather or confine, as in a pinfold--strongly suggests that he was much affected by a wrangle with Hill the farmer whose property bordered his. His real counterpart, Waugh, had an additional reason for using this surname. "Pinfold...was the real name of the family who occupied Piers Court [Waugh's house] for most of the 17th and 18th centuries."[10]

In order to establish the power that the voices will be able to assume, Waugh describes the nature of his own, and Pinfold's, Catholicism, suggesting that, in the wider world beyond Lychpole,[11] Pinfold is to be vulnerable, unprotected, in many ways. There is a sense of impending disaster as Pinfold leaves his sanctuary to cruise to Ceylon for the sake of his health, and to write. Pinfold needs the "barrier" of his religion to survive; he needs Dom van Zeller's rock:

> The Pinfolds' religion made a slight but perceptible barrier between them and these neighbours, a large part of whose activities centred round their parish churches. The Pinfolds were Roman Catholics, Mrs Pinfold by upbringing, Mr Pinfold by a later development. He had been received into the Church - 'conversion' suggests an event more sudden and emotional than his calm acceptance of the propositions of his faith - in early manhood, at the time when many Englishmen of humane education were falling into communism. Unlike them Mr Pinfold remained steadfast. But he was reputed bigoted rather than pious. His trade by its nature is liable to the condemnation of the clergy as, at the best, frivolous; at the worst, corrupting. Moreover, by the narrow standards of the age his habits of life were self-indulgent and his utterances lacked prudence. And at the very time when the leaders of his Church were exhorting their people to emerge from the catacombs into the forum, to make their influence felt in democratic politics and to regard worship as a corporate rather than a private act, Mr Pinfold burrowed ever deeper into the rock. Away from his parish he sought the least

> frequented Mass; at home he held aloof from the multifarious organizations which have sprung into being at the summons of the hierarchy to redeem the times. (OGP, 13)

It is worth pausing to note that the last dozen lines of the passage above foreshadow Waugh's own protests against changes decreed by the Second Vatican Council, and his despair at the language and meaning of "progressive" theologians. For example, Mr. Pinfold shrinks, implicitly, from the idea that worship is "a corporate rather than a private act." In 1962 Waugh wrote, "When young theologians talk, as they do, of Holy Communion as 'a social meal' they find little response in the hearts and minds of their less sophisticated brothers" (E, 608). In 1964, seven years after the publication of *Pinfold*, Waugh continued with his theme. "We pray in silence. 'Participation' in the Mass does not mean hearing our own voices. It means God hearing our voices. Only He knows who is 'participating' at Mass" (E, 630).

By contrast, Pinfold willingly, though ignorantly, comes out from behind his "barrier." Even before he takes ship for infidel countries, he begins to lose, and actively to abandon, the strength that his faith gave him. "The tiny kindling of charity which came to him through his religion sufficed only to temper his disgust and change it to boredom" (OGP, 14). More precisely: "That Sunday morning Mr Pinfold did not go to Mass. He lay in bed until midday and, when he came down, hobbled to the drawing-room window and gazed across the bare, icy park thinking of the welcoming tropics. Then he said: 'Oh God, here comes the Bruiser'" (OGP, 28). Having missed Mass, Mr. Pinfold calls on the name of God, but in vain. Following this incident, as his health decreases and his drug use increases, Pinfold more often fails to pray: "Mr Pinfold dictated, '*Everyone in ship most helpful. Love, Gilbert*,' fumbled with a handful of silver, then crept to his cabin. There he took his large

grey pills and a swig of his sleeping-draught. Then, prayerless, he got himself to bed" (OGP, 33).

Having largely abandoned Mass-going and private prayer, Pinfold becomes a prey to invisible voices which begin by sounding broadly, embarrassingly and cruelly pious. He hears a distressingly emotional and personal evangelical prayer-meeting, followed by an intensely private interview:

> 'Billy, you know what we talked about last time. Have you done it again? Have you been impure, Billy?'
>
> 'Yes, sir. I can't help it, sir.'
>
> 'God never tempts us beyond our strength, Billy. I've told you that, haven't I? Do you suppose I do not feel these temptations, too, Billy? Very strongly at times. But I resist, don't I? You know I resist, don't I, Billy?'
>
> Mr Pinfold was horror-struck. He was being drawn into participation in a scene of gruesome indecency. His sticks lay by the bunk. He took the blackthorn and beat strongly on the floor.
>
> 'Did you hear anything then, Billy? A knocking. That is God knocking at the door of your soul. He can't come and help you unless you are pure, like me.' (OGP, 39)

Pinfold's discomfort is increased when he discovers that a fellow passenger denies all knowledge of the prayer-meeting. This both adds to his sense of unease and renders him more open to later attacks:

> Mr Pinfold sat alone and ordered a cocktail. When the steward brought it, he asked: 'Does this ship carry a regular chaplain?'
>
> 'Oh no, sir. The Captain reads the prayers on Sundays.'
>
> 'There's a clergyman, then, among the passengers?'
>
> 'I haven't seen one, sir. Here's the list.'
>
> Mr Pinfold studied the passenger list. No name bore any prefix indicating Holy Orders. A strange ship, thought Mr Pinfold, in which laymen were allowed to evangelize a presumably heathen crew; religious mania perhaps on the part of one of the officers.
>
> Waking and sleeping he had lost count of time. It seemed he had been many days at sea in this strange ship. When Glover came into the bar, Mr Pinfold said affably: 'Nice to see you again.'
>
> Glover looked slightly startled by this greeting.
>
> 'I've been down in my cabin,' he said.

'I had to come up. I was embarrassed by that prayer-meeting. Weren't you?'
'Prayer-meeting?' said Glover. 'No.'
'Right under our feet. Couldn't you hear it?'
'I heard nothing,' said Glover. (OGP, 40)

Pinfold does have brief moments of relief, unreal and real. In the first case, Pinfold hears an imaginary nurse sooth an equally imaginary wounded lascar by saying the rosary for him: "Part of the treatment prescribed by the hospital was a sedative injection, and as this spread its relief over the unhappy lascar, Mr Pinfold too grew drowsy until he fell asleep to the sound of the nurse murmuring the Angelic Salutation" (OGP, 49). Considerably later, real prayer gives him brief peace. "Mr Pinfold did not dress or dine. He was very weary and he sat alone on deck until the passengers began to come up from dinner. Then he went to his cabin and for the first time in three days put on pajamas, said his prayers, got into bed, turned off the light, composed himself for sleep, and slept" (OGP, 112).

But such respites are very temporary, and as Pinfold's journey continues the voices become both more personally insulting and more crudely Catholic in their phraseology. The voice of an old friend, Clutton-Cornforth, someone whom Pinfold has known for thirty years, and who is a pillar of the cultural establishment, working both for the BBC Third Programme and editing a renowned literary magazine, begins its attack:

> 'Gilbert Pinfold,' he hears, 'poses a precisely antithetical problem, or should we say? the same problem in antithetical form. The basic qualities of a Pinfold novel seldom vary and may be enumerated thus: conventionality of plot, falseness of characterization, morbid sentimentality, gross and hackneyed farce alternating with grosser and more hackneyed melodrama; cloying religiosity, which may be found tedious or blasphemous according as the reader shares or repudiates his doctrinal preconceptions; and adventitious and offensive sensuality that is clearly introduced for commercial motives. All this presented in a style which, when it varies from the trite, lapses into positive illiteracy.' (OGP, 62-63)

The torture is taken up by a group of virtual strangers, but at least they have names:

> It was the general who voiced the thought uppermost in Mr Pinfold's mind. 'Why Pinfold?' he asked.
>
> 'It was a painful choice,' said Captain Steerforth, 'but not a difficult one. He is the obvious man, really. No one else on board would take them in for a moment. He looks like a secret agent. I think he was one during the war. He's a sick man and therefore expendable. And, of course, he's a Roman Catholic. That ought to make things a little easier for him in Spain.' (OGP, 95)

Then all the passengers, named and nameless, join in a loathsome chorus:

> Mr Pinfold walked on but wherever he went he was the topic.
>
> '... Lord of the Manor of Lychpole.'
>
> 'Anyone can be that. It's often a title that goes with some tumbledown farmhouse these days.'
>
> 'Oh, Pinfold lives in great style I can tell you. Footmen in livery.'
>
> 'I can guess what he does with the footmen.'
>
> 'Not anymore. He's been impotent for years you know. That's why he's always thinking of death.'
>
> 'Is he always thinking of death?'
>
> 'Yes. He'll commit suicide one of these days, you'll see.'
>
> 'I thought he was a Catholic. They aren't allowed to commit suicide, are they?'
>
> 'That wouldn't stop Pinfold. He doesn't really *believe* in his religion you know. He just pretends because he thinks it aristocratic. It goes with being Lord of the Manor.'
>
> 'There's only one Lychpole in the world, he told the wireless man.'
>
> 'Only one Lychpole and Pinfold is its Lord...' (OGP, 101-02)

The last lines of this passage echo with the Muslim profession of faith. "There is no God but the One God and Muhammad is his prophet." Pinfold has left the Catholic world, and it seems to have abandoned him. Once on board ship his faith appears to lose its saving grace, or Pinfold is somehow bereft of belief:

> He had, since his acceptance of the laws of the Church, developed what approximated to a virtuous disposition; a reluctance to commit deliberate grave sins, which was independent of the fear of Hell; he had assumed a personality to which such specifically forbidden actions were inappropriate. And yet amorous expectations began to stir in Mr Pinfold. (OGP, 115)

Not only is Pinfold drawn to sin, "he had given up any attempt to say his prayers; the familiar, hallowed words provoked a storm of blasphemous parody from Goneril"

(OGP, 133). Evil seems to stalk the *Caliban* and pursue Pinfold. "Goneril cut in: 'We'll have you in hell for this, Gilbert. We'll get you and you know it. We'll never let you go. We've got you'" (OGP, 137). Pinfold himself begins to believe that evil forces possess him, as he writes to his wife:

> *I think it might be worth consulting Father Westmacott when I get back. He knows all about existentialism and psychology and ghosts and diabolic possession. Sometimes I wonder whether it is not literally the Devil who is molesting me.* (OGP, 146)

Certainly the Devil seems to enter Church with Pinfold the first time he attends Mass since his sickness. Not even the church of the great fighter and archangel Michael seems able to keep out evil:

> It was Sunday and he went to Mass for the first time since he had been struck ill. The voices followed him. The taxi took him first to the Anglican church. '... What's the difference Gilbert? It's all nonsense anyway. You don't believe in God. There's no one here to show off to. No one will listen to your prayers - except us. *We* shall hear them. You're going to pray to be left alone, aren't you, Gilbert? Aren't you? But only we will hear and we won't let you alone. Never, Gilbert, never....' But when he reached the little Catholic church, which, ironically enough, he found to be dedicated to St. Michael and the Angels, only Margaret followed him into the dusky, crowded interior. She knew the Mass and made the Latin responses in clear, gentle tones. Epistle and Gospel were read in the vernacular. There was a short sermon, during which Mr Pinfold asked:
>
> 'Margaret, are you a Catholic?'
>
> 'In a way.'
>
> 'In what way?'
>
> 'That's something you mustn't ask.'
>
> Then she rose with him to recite the creed and later, at the sacring-bell she urged: 'Pray for *them* Gilbert. They need prayers.' But Mr Pinfold could not pray for Angel and Goneril.
>
> On Monday he arranged his passage. On Tuesday he spent another ineffably tedious night at Bombay. On Wednesday night at Karachi he changed back into winter clothes. Somewhere on the sea they may have passed the *Caliban*. They steered far clear of Aden. Across the Moslem world the voices of hate pursued Mr Pinfold. It was when they reached Christendom that Angel changed his tune. At breakfast at Rome Mr Pinfold addressed the waiter, who spoke rather good English, in rather bad Italian. It was an affectation which Goneril was quick to exploit.

> 'No spikka da Eenglish,' she jeered. 'Kissa da monk. Dolce far niente.' (OGP, 148-49)

Even in Rome, the great Catholic city, Pinfold is not free of the voices. Rome may be at the heart of Christendom, but for Pinfold something more is necessary. First he returns to the only country in which he is truly at home, England. Next, he meets his wife in a hotel. She speaks gently and tenderly to him, but at the same time, he hears voices. Then, suddenly, they stop. Mr. Pinfold sits silently and then announces:

> 'They've gone,' he said at length. 'In that minute. Gone for good.'
> 'I hope that's true. What are we going to do now? I couldn't make any plans till I knew what sort of state I'd find you in. Father Westmacott gave me the name of a man he says we can trust.'
> 'A looney doctor?'
> 'A psychologist - but a Catholic so he must be all right.'
> 'No,' said Mr Pinfold. 'I've had enough of psychology. How about taking the tea train home?' (OGP, 154)

Finally, his own strength of mind and character seem to resurface, and he begins to be whole. Yet England, wife and returning self-possession are still not enough, nor yet does his first happy visit to Mass after his journey heal him immediately. To work seems to be the remaining, and crucial, element in his recall to real life. "Next day was Sunday. After Mass Mr Pinfold said: 'You know I can't face the Bruiser. It's going to be several weeks before I talk to him about his Box. Have a fire lighted in the library. I'm going to do some writing'" (OGP, 156).

Waugh felt so much involved in and with *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* that he could not assess it objectively: "I have worked hard and easily, seldom writing less than a thousand words a day. The book is too personal for me to judge it" (D, 769).

Reviewers were not so reluctant to judge. J.B. Priestley most certainly judged *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*, (and Waugh), and in language and temper which might have been

those of Pinfold's voices, escaping from the novel's pages. "Pinfold...is not a Catholic landed gentleman pretending to be an author. He is an author pretending to be a Catholic landed gentleman" (CH, 389). As both Pinfold and Waugh demonstrate, though it seems to be beyond the bounds of Priestley's imagination, a single human being may, successfully and honestly, unite these two occupations.

Readers will never certainly know how much of *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* was the result of diseased imagination, how much of controlled imagination. Given the power of the fiction, does it matter? What is unquestionable is that subject and author were devout Catholics who suffered greatly and who are difficult to distinguish, one from the other. *Pinfold* is a circular novel, its end in its beginning, the two being inseparable. Here are the concluding lines:

> [Pinfold] returned the manuscripts to the drawer, spread a new quire of foolscap before him, and wrote in his neat, steady hand:
> *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*
> *A Conversation Piece*
> *Chapter One*
> *Portrait of the Artist in Middle-Age* (OGP, 157)

The reader has just finished a novel whose very first words, on the title page, are *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold: A Conversation Piece*. Turning the page the reader came to Chapter 1, "Portrait of the Artist in Middle-Age." Beginning and end are one and the same, united. So are Waugh and Pinfold united. They come together in a novel that is doubly Catholic in its creator and its creation. *The Loved One* is also circular, but negatively so. Dennis goes back to his beginnings in England, as a worse fake than when he arrived in America. He runs widdershins, against right, reason, and truth.

****

The Loved One and *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* do not fit so inextricably together, yet they do make a neat pair, held together by the obsessions which inhabit them. They also come together as do night and day. *The Loved One* is a light, brilliant novel, though with the dark message that Dennis has added "his bit to the wreckage...his young heart,..."(LO, 127), in truth he has sold his soul. "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. xvi.26). *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* is a bleak novel, terrifying even when ludicrous or funny. And yet at the novel's end, whole like the circle, Mr. Pinfold is saved. His faith and the Church shook, but both finally stood firm. His soul had its dark night but the dawn came. *The Loved One* and *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* are then, not simply two tales of obsession, but of the regress and progress of two souls, Dennis's lost and Gilbert's found.

CHAPTER VI

Sword Of Honour: Faith Without Hope

Seldom has Evelyn Waugh stated with the absolute clarity and anguish he does in the 1965 Preface to *Sword of Honour* the intent, and the actual outcome, of one of his novels:

> The product is intended (as it was originally) to be read as a single story. I sought to give a description of the Second World War as it was seen and experienced by a single, uncharacteristic Englishman, and to show its effect on him. For this purpose I invented three clowns who have prominent parts in the structure of the story, but not in its theme.
>
> On reading the book I realized that I had done something quite outside my original intention. I had written an obituary of the Roman Catholic Church in England as it had existed for many centuries. All the rites and most of the opinions here described are already obsolete. When I wrote *Brideshead Revisited* I was consciously writing an obituary of the doomed English upper class. It never occurred to me, writing *Sword of Honour* that the Church was susceptible to change. I was wrong and I have seen a superficial revolution in what then seemed permanent. Despite the faith of many of the characters, *Sword of Honour* was not specifically a religious book. Recent developments have made it, in fact, a document of Catholic usage of my youth. (SH, 9-10)[1]

The obsoleteness which Waugh remarks stemmed largely from constitutions and decrees promulgated by the Second Vatican Council, many of which were anathema to Waugh. "The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy" caused him agony. The overall task of Vatican II and the place of the liturgy in the Church is described by Father Walter M. Abbott:

> What the Second Vatican Council said is what it said in its official Latin texts. Exclusive of 992 footnotes of varying length, the sixteen promulgated texts ran to approximately 103,014 words.... John XXIII had been Pope for merely ninety days when, on January 25, 1959, he made the first and completely unexpected announcement of his plan to convoke the Church's Twenty-First Ecumenical Council, the first since Vatican I of 1869-70. On October 11, 1962, after nearly four years of exhaustive preparation, the Council finally opened....the eighty-year-old Pope John... set the pastoral tone which was to dominate the Council deliberations. The first period of these deliberations ended on December 8, 1962....
>
> By the end of the second session, on December 4, 1963, the first two Council documents were ready for promulgation: the Constitution on the

> Sacred Liturgy and the Decree on the Instruments of Social Communication....
>
> [God's] purpose was...that [the Apostles] might exercise the work of salvation which they were proclaiming, by means of sacrifice and sacraments, around which the entire liturgical life revolves....
>
> To accomplish so great a work, Christ is always present in His Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations....
>
> In the earthly liturgy, by way of foretaste, we share in that heavenly liturgy which is celebrated in the holy city of Jerusalem....the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the fountain from which all her power flows.[2]

Sword of Honour is not merely a "document of the Catholic usage of my youth" (SH, 10), but has become a lament for it. But it should be remembered that Waugh's unhappiness at the changes within the Catholic Church began long before, as was discussed in the previous chapter. His diary entry for Easter Day 1964, just before he began to transform the trilogy into *Sword of Honour*, shows how his unhappiness continued and grew:

> Easter 1964.... When I first came into the Church I was drawn, not by splendid ceremonies but by the spectacle of the priest as a craftsman. He had an important job to do which none but he was qualified for. He and his apprentice stumped up to the altar with their tools and set to work without a glance at those behind them, still less with any intention to make a personal impression on them.
>
> 'Participate' - the cant word - does not mean to make a row as the Germans suppose. One participates in a work of art when one studies it with reverence and understanding. (D, 792-93)

Waugh claims in his Preface that "Despite the faith of many of the characters, *Sword of Honour* was not specifically a religious book" (SH, 9). However, examined not simply as "an obituary for the Roman Catholic Church in England" but as "a document of Catholic usage of my youth" it is difficult not to see it as a Catholic novel. This idea is reinforced when one considers not simply the Catholic images and allusions which permeate the text, but also the fact that *Sword of Honour* is an account of Guy Crouchback's spiritual journey from formulaic "belief" to a state of grace, to real faith.

For Waugh and for Guy belief, faith, and worship are intensely private. In *Remote People* Waugh describes the secretiveness, as opposed to privacy, of the early Church:

> I saw the Church of the first century as a dark and hidden thing, as dark and hidden as the seed germinating in the womb; legionnaires off duty slipping furtively out of barracks, greeting each other by signs and passwords in a locked upper room in the side street of some Mediterranean seaport; slaves at dawn creeping down from the grey twilight into the candle-lit, smoky chapels of the catacombs. The priests hid their office, practising trades; their identity was known only to initiates; they were criminals against the law of their country.[3]

Guy Crouchback initially longs for a Church that is at odds with the rest of the world, secret. "Often he wished that he lived in penal times when Broome had been a solitary outpost of the Faith, surrounded by aliens. Sometimes he imagined himself serving the last mass for the last Pope in a catacomb at the end of the world..." (SH, 19). For Waugh, the "hidden thing" is the Mystery of the Catholic faith, and it is Mystery that has begun to vanish because of the requirements of the Second Vatican Council. And it is lost Mystery which gives rise to Waugh's spiritual agony, and which will provide a context for reading the recension. It almost certainly explains the hopelessness of the conclusion of *Sword of Honour*, as opposed to the hope of the final lines of *Unconditional Surrender*.

Sword of Honour is the story, rather like Waugh's, of Guy Crouchback's attempt to join the army at the beginning of World War II, his frustration at failure, and finally his acceptance into the Halberdiers. He is, at thirty-five, along with one or two other junior officers, an old man. His military career is largely inglorious, often hilarious, and fraught with major and minor disasters. Besides military humiliations, Guy suffers when his former wife appears to torment him. Eventually, however, when she is pregnant by an ex-hairdresser and military con-man, Trimmer, she becomes a Catholic, and she and Guy re-marry. In

Catholic terms they continue an unbroken marriage. Guy's various experiences gradually teach him charity, and his remarriage and his willingness to bring up the bastard child indicate this.

At a different level, Guy's journey to charity is a tribute to his beloved Crusader, Sir Roger Waybroke, a would-be soldier for Christ, who died in Italy before he could join the Crusade. Prior to the war, Guy lives in Italy, in his foreign ancestral home, in the village Santa Dulcina delle Rocce, where Roger died. At the novel's end Guy has returned permanently to England to live at the home farm of what had been the English ancestral home of the Crouchbacks', Broome.

It is important to record and consider at least a broad sample of the Catholic references in *Sword of Honour*. Waugh uses these to place the action of the novel within a secure Catholic framework. The allusions fit, loosely, into two categories: those which relate to specific religious fast and feast days, as kept or experienced by the Crouchback family and by more minor characters; and those which describe, or comment more broadly on a range of Catholic experience, again largely of the Crouchbacks. It is interesting to note how frequently the novel's references relate to Holy Week, the most important period in the Catholic calendar. Here, for example, is Guy preparing for the fast days ending on Holy Saturday:

> On the morning of Ash Wednesday Guy rose early and went to Mass. With the ash still on his forehead he breakfasted and tramped up the hill to Kut-al-Imara....
>
> The words of the day's liturgy echoed dreadfully in Guy's mind: *Memento, homo, quia pulvis es, et in pulverum reverteris*. (SH, 128-31)

On the morning of the following Good Friday, Guy briefly joins his father at the Altar of Repose:

> Dawn was breaking that Good Friday when Guy arrived at the little church, but inside it was as still as night. The air was heavy with the smell of flowers and candles. His father was alone, kneeling stiff and upright at the prie-dieu before the improvised altar, gazing straight before him into the golden lights of the altar. He turned to smile at Guy and then resumed his prayer.
>
> Guy knelt not far from him and prayed too.
>
> Presently a sacristan came in and drew the black curtains from the east windows; brilliant sunlight blinded their eyes, momentarily, to the candles and ciborium. (SH, 175).

There is something in Mr. Crouchback's prayerful attitude, and his gazing at the golden lights, even though he acknowledges Guy's presence (as both fatherly and Christian charity require), that suggests prayer as a mysterious experience for the true believer.

Even a comic scene can bring a holy day to mind:

> On the pavement opposite Turtle's a group of experimental novelists in firemen's uniform were squirting a little jet of water into the morning room.
>
> Guy was momentarily reminded of Holy Saturday at Downside; early gusty March mornings of boyhood; the doors wide open in the unfinished butt of the Abbey; half the school coughing; fluttering linen; the glowing brazier and the priest with his hyssop, paradoxically blessing fire with water. (SH, 266)

Very different is Mr. Crouchback's experiences rather than recalled Holy Saturday:

> Holy Saturday in Matchet; Mr. Crouchback broke his Lenten fast. He had given up, as he always did, wine and tobacco. During the preceding weeks two parcels had come from his wine merchant, badly pilfered on the railway, but still with a few bottles intact. At luncheon Mr. Crouchback drank a pint of burgundy. It was what his merchant cared to send him, not what he would have ordered, but he took it gratefully. After luncheon he filled his pipe. Now that he had no sitting-room, he was obliged to smoke downstairs. That afternoon seemed warm enough for sitting out. In a sheltered seat above the beaches, he lit the first pipe of Easter, thinking of that morning's new fire. (SH, 408)

Finally, very far from Broome or Matchet, unable to hear them, Guy is aware that "While the first bells of Easter rang throughout Christendom, the muezzin called his faithful to prayer..." (SH, 391). Given the special and triumphant place of Easter in *Sword of*

Honour, and in the Catholic year and its liturgy, one is not surprised that Waugh's most dolorous commentaries on the post-Vatican II Church were written at Easter.

It is not only in the context of a Catholic character's actions or memories that Waugh continually alludes to holy days:

> On Holy Saturday 1941 [Major-General Whale] was summoned to attend the A.C.I.G.'s weekly meeting at the War Office. He went with foreboding. He was not fully informed of the recent disasters in the Middle East but he knew things were going badly. Benghazi had fallen the week before. It did not seem clear where the retreating army intended to make its stand. On Maundy Thursday the Australians in Greece had been attacked on their open flank. It was not clear where they would stand. Belgrade had been bombed on Palm Sunday. (SH, 387)

Major-General Whale, jocularly known as "Sprat," is not, as far as the reader can tell, aware of this joyous day of Holy Week. In the passage quoted above, and in the two that follow, it is the narrator who speaks. "Outside, in the cathedral, whose tower could be seen from the War Office windows; far beyond the lands of enemy and ally, the Easter fire was freshly burning.... All over the world, unheard by Sprat, the *Exultet* [sic] was being sung that morning" (SH, 388-90). Undoubtedly "the world" the narrator and Waugh refer to is the Catholic world, united, above and beyond human politics and passions, by the belief in "unam sanctam catholicam et apostolicam Ecclesiam." This sense of universality continues, though for Waugh the foundations of the only true Ecclesia have already begun to shake and are about to crumble. But, for the moment, there are the days of the ecclesiastical year, ensuring changeless continuity and stability. A holy day is alluded to in relation to Kerstie Kilbannock's volunteer work at No. 6 Transit Camp canteen: "All the ladies preferred the 'other ranks' canteen by reason of the superior manners which prevailed there. It was Easter Monday, after Virginia had been there a week, that she took her turn beside Kerstie at the officers' bar" (SH, 410). Later, "Kerstie was away, attending St. Nicholas' Day festivities at

her son's prep school..." (SH, 674). And still later in the year, "Ian and Kerstie Kilbannock returned to London from Scotland on the night of Childermas" (SH, 695).

With brilliantly ordered, though apparently casually strewn, references Waugh takes his characters and readers from Ash Wednesday to the Feast of the Holy Innocents, thus incorporating virtually every major holy day in the ecclesiastical year. Not only this, he gives particular prominence to Holy Saturday, the beginning of Easter, most joyful and potent days in the Catholic year. And though one would not claim that these days of Christian feasting or fasting are the exclusive property of the Catholic Church, in Waugh's private and fictional worlds they become so.

Catholicism, variously presented, is integral to the story told in *Sword of Honour*. It is equally integral to the life and spiritual experiences of the faithful in the novel, mostly members of the Crouchback family. The differing attitudes of Guy's sister, his nephew, and Guy himself are clearly shown in this early reference to morning Mass:

> 'Mass is at eight,' said Angela. 'We ought to start at twenty to. I'm picking up some evacuees in Uley.'
>
> 'Oh, I say, isn't there something later? I was looking forward to a long lie.'
>
> 'I thought we might all go to communion tomorrow. Do come, Tony.'
>
> 'All right, Mum, of course I will. Only make it twenty-five to in that case. I shall have to go to scrape after weeks of wickedness.'
>
> Box-Bender looked self-conscious, as he still did, always, when religious practices were spoken of. He did not get used to it - this ease with the Awful....
>
> That night, lying long awake, obliged to choose between air and light, choosing air, not reading, Guy thought: Why Tony? What crazy economy was it that squandered Tony and saved himself? In China when called to the army it was honourable to hire a poor young man and send him in one's place. Tony was rich in love and promise. He himself destitute, possessed of nothing save a few dry grains of faith. Why could he not go to France in Tony's place, to the neat little wound or the barbarous prison?

> But next morning as he knelt at the altar-rail beside Angela and Tony he seemed to hear his answer in the words of the Mass: *Domine non sum dignus*. (SH, 37-38)

Mr. Crouchback's open-hearted and clear-minded sense of both spiritual and practical elements of his Catholicism could not be more evident than in this uncomplicated exchange with Guy:

> 'There's something I looked out for him [Tony] the other day and wanted to give him. I know he'd have liked to have it - Gervase's medal of Our Lady of Lourdes.... Tony ought to have it.'
>
> 'I don't think there'd be time to get it to him now.'
>
> 'I'd like to have given it to him myself. It's not the same thing sending it in a letter. Harder to explain.'
>
> 'It didn't protect Gervase much, did it?'
>
> 'Oh yes,' said Mr. Crouchback, 'much more than you might think....he found himself with a girl they'd picked up somewhere. She began to fool about and pulled off his tie and then she found the medal and all of a sudden they sobered down and she began talking about the convent where she'd been at school and so they parted friends and no harm done. I call that being protected. I've worn a medal all my life. Do you?'
>
> 'I have from time to time. I haven't one at the moment.'
>
> 'You should, you know, with bombs and things about. If you get hit and taken to hospital, they know you're a Catholic and send for a priest.... Would *you* care to have Gervase's medal?...'
>
> 'Very much....'
>
> Presently his father's door opened: 'I say, are you asleep?'
>
> 'Not quite.'
>
> 'There's this thing you said you'd like. Gervase's medal. I might forget it in the morning.' (SH, 41-47)

For Mr. Crouchback, a holy medal is indicative of identity in ways more powerful than a mere military identity disc. It is also protective, something which the nature of the identity disc utterly contradicts. The perfect simplicity of Mr. Crouchback's faith is exemplary. Interestingly, Gene D. Phillips refers to Mr. Crouchback's faith as "simple" (P, 113). His choice of word seems patronising, which is why I have preferred to use "simplicity." The latter word is rich with meaning, defining completely the deep and lasting understanding of Mr. Crouchback's faith, and his remarkable purity of belief.

When Guy and his father discuss their religion, in conversation or by letter, Mr. Crouchback usually manages to convey, without preaching, an important Catholic message to Guy. He is a fixed point of faith and charity throughout *Sword of Honour*, someone to remind Guy of the true nature of fidelity:

> Guy took his leave and was at Matchet when Italy surrendered. News of the King's flight came on the day the brigade landed at Salerno. It brought Guy some momentary exhilaration.
>
> 'That looks like the end of the Piedmontese usurpation,' he said to his father. 'What a mistake the Lateran Treaty was. It seemed masterly at the time - how long? fifteen years ago? What are fifteen years in the history of Rome? How much better it would have been if the Popes had sat it out and then emerged saying: "What was all that? Risorgimento? Garibaldi? Cavour? The House of Savoy? Mussolini? Just some hooligans from out of town causing a disturbance. Come to think of it wasn't there once a poor little boy whom they called King of Rome?" That's what the Pope ought to be saying today.'
>
> Mr. Crouchback regarded his son sadly. 'My dear boy,' he said, 'you're really talking the most terrible nonsense, you know. That isn't at all what the Church is like. It isn't what she's *for*.' (SH, 544)

Mr. Crouchback pursues his theme with all the weight and 'caritas' of his Church to sustain him:

> *Marine Hotel, Matchet*
> *20 September 1943*
>
> *My dear Guy,*
>
> *I haven't been happy about our conversation on your last evening. I said too much or too little. Now I must say more.*
>
> *Of course in the 1870's and 80's every decent Roman disliked the Piedmontese, just as the decent French now hate the Germans. They had been invaded. And, of course, most of the Romans we know kept it up, sulking. But that isn't the Church. The Mystical Body doesn't strike attitudes and stand on its dignity. It accepts suffering and injustice. It is ready to forgive at the first hint of compunction.*
>
> *When you spoke of the Lateran Treaty did you consider how many souls may have been reconciled and have died at peace as the result of it? How many children may have been brought up in the faith who might have lived in ignorance? But quantitative judgements don't apply. If only one soul was saved that is full compensation for any amount of loss of 'face.'*

> *I write like this because I am worried about you and I gather I may not live very much longer. I saw the doctor yesterday and he seemed to think I have something pretty bad the matter.* (SH, 546-47)

Andrew Rutherford quotes this letter to show that although the "prevailing darkness is of course continually lightened by sardonic comedy,...the only real alternative to despair is offered by Guy's father."[4] Rutherford also comments on the part that Broome plays, though a much smaller one than Catholicism, in Mr. Crouchback's life:

> A traditionalist and cuckold like Tony Last, Guy too lives in a world of betrayal; but Broome provides a firmer base than Hetton for the reassertion of aristocratic values, while Catholicism offers more profound religious insights than Tony's ridiculous...C. of E. The spiritual value of these two inherited traditions is embodied in Guy's father, whose deep piety and family pride flower - unexpectedly perhaps - in the charity which was so notably lacking in *Brideshead Revisited*. (It is hard to imagine Charles Ryder saying 'Here's how' to Major Tickeridge, or showing kindness and courtesy to Miss Vavasour of the Marine Hotel; and charity was indeed the virtue Waugh himself found it most difficult to attain.) The affectionate comedy that plays over Mr. Crouchback does nothing to discredit his goodness, which is a point of moral reference throughout the trilogy; his function being, as Waugh told F.J. Stopp, 'to keep audible a steady undertone of the decencies and true purpose of life behind the chaos of events and fantastic characters,' though he was also a figure as 'a typical victim...in the war against the Modern Age.'[5]

Littlewood comments that Mr. Crouchback's "life had been without drama and his sufferings have not been heroic" (Li, 167); however, his sufferings are all the more heroic for having gone unnoticed, and because of his utter lack of complaint.

In 1954, Monsignor Ronald Knox, Waugh's great friend, undertook to translate the autobiography of St. Thérèse of Lisieux.[6] According to Waugh, "No religious book of the last hundred years has had so great an influence as *The Story of a Soul*, first printed in 1898."[7] Although Mr. Crouchback is not a masculine portrait of this young nun, they do seem to share a similar type of virtue and attitude to life, especially if one considers St. Thérèse before she was stricken with tuberculosis.

> ...Sister Teresa stuck bravely to her 'little way' of simple trust in and love for God....she had shown...that sainthood is attainable by anybody, however obscure, lowly, untalented, 'ordinary,' by the doing of small things and the discharge of daily duties in a perfected spirit of love for God.[8]

Mr. Crouchback is a man of exemplary holiness who died in the grace of God. He must still, however, as punishment for his forgiven sins, endure Purgatory briefly:

> 'Not long for purgatory,' his confessor had said of Mr Crouchback. As the nuns sang the *Dies Irae* with all its ancient deprecations of divine wrath, Guy knew that his father was joining his voice with theirs:
>
> *Ingemisco, tamquam reus:*
> *Culpa rubet vultus meus*
> *Supplicanti parce, Deus;*
>
> That would be his prayer, who saw, and had always seen, quite clearly the difference in kind between the goodness of the most innocent of humans and the blinding, ineffable goodness of God....
>
> The altar was censed. The celebrant sang: '*...Tuis enim fidelibus, Domine, via mutatur, non tollitur...*' 'Changed not ended' reflected Guy. It was a huge transition for the old man who had walked with Felix along the cliffs at Matchet - a huge transition, even, for the man who had knelt so rapt in prayer after his daily Communion - to the 'everlasting mansion prepared for him in heaven'. (SH, 601-02)

Guy, on the other hand, is still in the midst of his earthly Purgatory, unable even to pray properly:

> Guy's prayers were directed to, rather than for, his father. For many years now the direction in the *Garden of the Soul*, 'Put yourself in the presence of God,' had for Guy come to mean a mere act of respect, like the signing of the Visitors' Book at an Embassy or Government House. He reported for duty saying to God: 'I don't ask anything from you. I am here if you want me. I don't suppose I can be any use, but if there is anything I can do, let me know,' and left it at that. (SH, 603)

Mr. Crouchback's funeral gives Waugh an opportunity for one of the longest, but in context necessary, descriptions of a Catholic rite. He continues:

> The nuns had lined the edges of the grave with moss and evergreen leaves and chrysanthemums, giving a faint suggestion of Christmas decoration. The undertaker's men deftly lowered the coffin; holy water, incense, the few prayers, the silent *Paternoster, the Benedictus*; holy water again; the *De profundis*. Guy, Angela, and Uncle Peregrine came forward,

took the sprinkler in turn and added their aspersions. Then it was ended. (SH, 605)

Precisely how unlike his saintly father Guy is shown clearly in an episode which is also a reminder of Mr. Crouchback's sense of the value of holy medals:

> 'Caught this black bastard in the very act, sir. Mucking about with your kit, sir.'
>
> 'Please, sir, I am the cabin boy, sir. I do not know this rude soldier.'
>
> 'That's all right, Glass. He's just doing his job. Now clear out both of you. I want to turn in.'
>
> 'You aren't surely going to have this native creeping round your quarters, sir?'
>
> 'I am no native, sir. I am a Christian Portuguese boy. Christian mama. Christian papa, six Christian children, sir.'
>
> He produced from his starched blouse a gold medal, strung round his neck, much worn with the long swing and plunge of the ship rubbing it year by year to and fro on his hairless dark chest.
>
> Guy's heart suddenly opened towards him. Here was his own kin. He yearned to show the medal he wore. Gervase's souvenir from Lourdes. There were men who would have done exactly that; better men than he who would perhaps have said 'Snap' and drawn a true laugh from the sullen Halberdier and so have made true peace between them.
>
> But Guy, with all this in his mind to do, merely felt in his pocket for two half-crowns and said: 'Here. Will this make things better?'
>
> 'Oh yes, sir, thank you. Very much better, sir,' and the Goanese turned and went on his way rejoicing a little, but not as a fellow man at peace; merely as a servant unexpectedly over-tipped. (SH, 234)

Just as Guy could not bring himself to say "here's how" with the Tickeridges, he cannot, though he "yearned to show the medal he wore," acknowledge fellowship with the Goanese cabin boy. Neither Mr. Crouchback nor Helena would have had this problem, a seeming lack of charity. Guy is not, however, a monster, and it seems possible that his yearning to display his medal suggests that he can feel charity, but that he cannot yet make himself express it publicly. Like his faith, it is still intensely private.

However, Guy is not ashamed of his faith, simply troubled by his lack of joy in it. His responses to his former wife Virginia's questions indicate resigned persistence rather than positive dedication:

> 'You never married again?'
> 'How could I?'
> 'Darling, don't pretend your heart was broken for life.'
> 'Apart from my heart, Catholics can't remarry, you know.'
> 'Oh, *that*. You still keep to all that.'
> 'More than ever.' (SH, 96)

His almost automatic repetition of an act of contrition when death seems near on a mission bungled by Ritchie-Hook suggests not an automaton, but the response of someone for whom Catholic practice is buried deep in the bone. It remains an essential part of his life and an inevitable preparation for death:

> It seemed to Guy rather likely that he would soon be killed. He repeated the words which are dignified by the name 'act' of contrition; words so familiar that he used them in dreams when falling from a height. But he also thought: what a preposterous way in which to get oneself killed! (SH, 243)

Guy's knowledge of Catholic literature is sound if far from profound, and unintentionally makes his Protestant brother-in-law, Box-Bender, seem foolishly uninformed when they discuss a list of Catholic titles:

> 'This is what I wanted to show you....'
> Guy read;
> *The Spiritual Combat by Francis de Sales.*
> *Christ the Ideal of the Monk by Abbot Marion.*
> *Spiritual Letters of Don John Chapman.*
> *The Practice of the Presence of God by Lawrence....*
> 'I think it ought to be "Dom John" not "Don John",' he said.
> 'Yes, yes, very likely. My secretary copied them. But what do you make of it?'
> 'Most edifying. I can't say I've read them much myself. Are you thinking of becoming a monk, Arthur?'
> The effect of the little quip was remarkable.
> '*Exactly*,' said Box-Bender. 'That's exactly what I expected you to say....'

> 'But what is this list?'
> 'They're the books Tony has sent for from prison....' (SH, 539)

Although it seems unlikely for Guy, and the circumstances make it even stranger, he has a mystical experience as he makes his first parachute jump:

> He experienced rapture, something as near as his earth-bound soul could reach to a foretaste of paradise, *locum refrigerii, lucis et pacis*. The aeroplane seemed as far distant as will, at the moment of death, the spinning earth. As though he had cast the constraining bonds of flesh and muscle and nerve, he found himself floating free; the harness that irked him in the narrow, dusky, resounding carriage now almost imperceptibly supported him. He was a free spirit in an element as fresh as on the day of its creation. (SH, 643)[9]

Guy may have had "a foretaste of paradise," but the words "locum refrigerii, lucis et pacis"--"a place of refreshing, light and peace"--refer to Purgatory. The words come from the *Memento etiam*, a prayer for the dead, according to Hugh Ross Williamson, an English theologian, who goes on to say:

> a 'place of refreshing, light and peace,' as our prayer has it, can still be a state of purgation, since the motive behind the purgation is our own love. Refreshed, we can see the sins that in our tiredness we did not think of as sins; light illumines the dark corners; in peace we dare relinquish the possession of our souls.[10]

Guy is in Purgatory, and the pain in his knee, damaged as he lands, must prove this. For it is the pain of Purgatory which punishes and purges. Clearly this must be a terrestrial Purgatory, as Guy's literal landing on the ground demonstrates, but it shows symbolically both the depth of his suffering and the true nature of his trials on earth.

The world Guy inhabits is a mirror-image of the supernatural Purgatory, a place of enervation, darkness and war. But there is an end to Purgatory. Just how close Guy came to the eternal, unendurable pains of Hell Waugh insists on, making real drama out of the banal. "'I expect we shall do another jump this afternoon,' said Gilpin. 'I feel quite ready for one

now.' 'I'm damned if I do,' said Guy" (SH, 644). For Guy there is *hope* of salvation, though he does not know it yet.

Guy is far from enraptured when, in Yugoslavia, he visits a priest to pray for the soul of the wife he remarried, who has been killed by a bomb:

> The old priest was back in his presbytery, alone and brushing the bare stone floor with a besom. He knew Guy by sight though they had never attempted to converse. Men in uniform boded no good to the parish.
>
> Guy saluted as he entered, laid his offering on the table. The priest looked at the present with surprise; then broke into thanks in Serbo-Croat. Guy said: 'Facilius loqui latine. Hoc est pro Missa. Uxor mea mortua est.'
>
> The priest nodded. 'Nomen?'
>
> Guy wrote Virginia's name in capitals in his pocket book and tore out the page. The priest put on his spectacles and studied the letters. 'Non es *partisan*?'
>
> 'Miles Anglicus sum.'
>
> 'Catholicus?'
>
> 'Catholicus.'
>
> 'Et uxor tua?'
>
> 'Catholica.'
>
> It did not sound a likely story. The priest looked again at the food, at the name on the sheet of paper, at Guy's battle-dress which he knew only as the uniform of the partisans. Then: 'Cras. Hora septem.' He held up seven fingers.
>
> 'Gratias.'
>
> 'Gratias tibi. Dominus tecum.' (SH, 749)

Catholic that he is, Guy cannot *not* have a priest pray for the repose of Virginia's soul. This Latin conversation between Yugoslavian Catholic priest and English Catholic soldier, impossible in their native tongues, emphasises the universality of the liturgical language of the Catholic Church, one of the factors which, for Waugh, made it so strong, so uniquely accessible across boundaries and borders. Once again the word "obituary" cannot be forgotten. In Waugh's fictional world of the 1940's Virginia is dead. In the real world of the 1950's and 1960's, as Waugh wrote and rewrote *Sword of Honour*, Latin as the only liturgical

language of the Church was debated and, finally, 'killed' by the Second Session of the Second Vatican Council in December, 1963.

So far, the Catholicism which permeates Waugh's text has been discovered and discussed. Next Waugh's portrayal of Guy Crouchback's life and character must be considered, for the manner in which Guy's story is made to unfold and his personality to develop is central both to Waugh's belief that he had written an obituary for the Catholic Church in England, and to my thesis that Waugh is a supremely Catholic novelist. A close connection between *Brideshead Revisited* and *Sword of Honour* will also be demonstrated.

As *Sword of Honour* opens Guy Crouchback's painful pilgrimage begins, as does Waugh's obituary for his Church. Guy Crouchback, Catholic of old family and long-time resident of Santa Dulcina delle Rocce, is preparing to leave Italy for England to join the army, as the Second World War begins: "Thirty-five years old, slight and trim, plainly foreign but not so plainly English, young now, in heart and step, he came to bid good-bye to a lifelong friend who lay, as was proper for a man dead eight hundred years, in the parish church" (SH, 15). Guy begins what he regards as his pilgrimage by visiting Sir Roger Waybrook:

> [St. Dulcina's] place as benefactor had been usurped by another figure whose tomb was always littered with screws of paper bearing petitions, whose fingers and toes were tied in bows of coloured wool as *aides-mémoire*. He was older than the church, except the bones of St. Dulcina and a pre-Christian thunderbolt which lay concealed in the back of the altar (whose existence the Arciprete always denied). His name, just legible still, was Roger of Waybroke. Knight and Englishman; his arms five falcons. His sword and one gauntlet still lay beside him. Guy's uncle, Peregrine, a student of such things, had learned some of his story. Waybroke, now Waybrook, was quite near London. Roger's manor had long ago been lost and over-built. He left it for the second Crusade, sailed from Genoa and was shipwrecked on this coast. There he enlisted under the local Count, who promised to take him to the Holy Land but led him first against a neighbour, on the walls of whose castle he fell at a moment of victory. The Count gave him honourable burial

> and there he had lain through the centuries, while the church crumbled and was rebuilt above him, far from Jerusalem, far from Waybroke, a man with a great journey still all before him and a great vow unfulfilled; but the people of Santa Dulcina delle Rocce, to whom the supernatural order in all its ramifications was ever present and ever more lively than the humdrum world about them, adopted Sir Roger and despite all clerical remonstrance canonized him, brought him their troubles and touched his sword for luck, so that its edge was always bright. All his life, but especially in recent years, Guy had felt an especial kinship with 'il Santo Inglese.' Now, on his last day, he made straight for the tomb and ran his finger, as the fishermen did, along the knight's sword. 'Sir Roger, pray for me,' he said, 'and for our endangered kingdom.' (SH, 15-16)[11]

Guy also decides to visit the parish priest:

> On impulse, not because his conscience troubled him but because it was a habit learned in childhood to go to confession before a journey, Guy made a sign to the sister and interrupted the succession of peasant urchins.[12]
>
> '*Beneditemi, padre, perchè ho peccato...*' Guy found it easy to confess in Italian. He spoke the language well but without nuances. There was no risk of going deeper than the denunciation of his few infractions of law, of his habitual weaknesses. Into that wasteland where his soul languished he need not, could not, enter. He had no words to describe it. There were no words in any language. There was nothing to describe, merely a void. His was not 'an interesting case', he thought. No cosmic struggle raged in his sad soul. It was as though eight years back he had suffered a tiny stroke of paralysis; all his spiritual faculties were just perceptibly impaired. He was 'handicapped' as Mrs. Garry of the Villa Datura would have put it. There was nothing to say about it.
>
> The priest gave him absolution and the traditional words of dismissal: 'Sia lodato Gesù Cristo,' and he answered 'Oggi, sempre.' He rose from his knees, said three 'Aves' before the waxen figure of St. Dulcina and passed through the leather curtain into the blazing sunlight of the piazza. (SH, 16-17)

Heath has described Guy's confession before leaving Italy as mere "childish habit" (He, 219). Guy's Catholic "habits," though sometimes performed resignedly, never, in *Sword of Honour*, have any suggestion of blasphemous parody. Heath's view of Guy's "childish habit" is in several ways at odds with my view of Guy's Catholic practices, described earlier in the chapter, and so needs additional discussion. "Childish" is a loaded word and largely negative. There seems to me no such negativity in Waugh's phrase,

"learned in childhood." Simply, this phraseology makes it entirely clear that Guy is a 'cradle Catholic,' rather than a convert. It entirely lacks the qualitative, judgemental tone that Heath chooses to give it. In the same vein, "habit," in Heath's paragraph, harbours implications of mindless activity. Certainly there are habits which fit this description. However, one is entitled to assume that the habit of confession was learned from Mr. Crouchback, at least partly. Could the saintly Mr. Crouchback teach a habit that was trivial? Does he not instead teach the necessary dailiness of Catholicism? It should not, either, be forgotten that to go to confession before a major undertaking, such as a long journey, was and still is, a common Catholic habit. The need to be in a state of grace is more important than the mere promptings of a guilty conscience. Guy does his penance--the saying of three Aves--and leaves the church. Although shriven, his spiritual state is unhealthy; it is a "wasteland where his soul languished" (SH, 17). No ordinary penance can repair his "impaired spiritual faculties" (SH, 17). Instead Guy must embark, not simply on a knightly pilgrimage, but must begin a penitential journey through a Purgatory on earth. His soul must be taught to be healthy, not to languish, but to become the core of his spiritual and physical being.

This journey is of vital consequence to the novel for two principal reasons. First it provides an unquestionably Catholic context for the whole work. Secondly, as it is Guy's journey, it places him and his spiritual state, no matter which narratorial voice speaks, at the focal point of all activity. This answers, to some extent, Cyril Connolly's criticism of *Men at Arms*, written when it was published as a separate volume in 1952. "Where I feel Mr. Waugh has gone wrong - and he can put this right in the remaining volumes - is in failing to build up relationships between his military characters, who do not exist in the round but only in their reality to the narrator" (CH, 338). Connolly may be right. However it seems more

probable that Waugh is depicting the dark shadowy penitential life that surrounds Guy during his long days of punishment in a version of Purgatory, where relationships cannot really exist. For Purgatory is a dreadfully lonely place, though the language Hugh Williamson uses to describe its nature and purpose has a curiously tranquil quality, to match the words "*locum refrigerii, lucis et pacis.*" The "Doctor Angelicus" has a different tone.

> According to St. Thomas Aquinas, the guilt (culpa) of venial sin is expiated immediately after death by an act of perfect charity and only the punishment remains to be borne; the smallest pain in Purgatory is greater than the greatest upon earth....[13]

There is nothing incongruous about Purgatory appearing in a novel that is rich with comedy and satire, nor about the fact that the tribulations and trials to which Guy is subjected throughout the novel frequently have comic or farcical tones. After all Dante's "Purgatory" is part of the *Divine Comedy*.

That Waugh alludes to Dante in *Men at Arms* is noted by James J. Lynch:

> When Ritchie-Hook assembles his officer trainees upon his first arrival at Kut-al-Imara House in *Men at Arms*, Waugh pinpoints his effect on Guy and the Halberdiers by means of a brief, unelaborated allusion to Canto IV of Dante's *Inferno*...the narrator describes him as follows: "Cesare armato con un occhio grifano." The allusion is to Dante's vision of "falcon-eyed Caesar armed" among the souls of the past-glorious who reside in Limbo.[14]

Lynch does not pursue his consideration of Dante beyond this specific quotation from the *Inferno* and the idea of souls in Limbo. However, it seems plain to me that, even without the stimulus of this allusion, it would be difficult not to see Guy's wartime experiences as a version of Purgatory. Also, his humiliations, accidents and comic disasters appear throughout *Sword of Honour*, not simply in the first stage that was *Men at Arms*. As additional evidence, Guy, like Dante, is guided through Purgatory, seldom able to take a step or make a decision for himself for the majority of his travels.

Unlike Dante, who had only Virgil to follow, Guy has several guides of varying degrees of maleficence or virtue. They also vary in competence as guides, the best, but least noticed, being his father. Three, as Waugh points out in the Preface, are clowns. Only one, Ludovic, is a true clown, ambiguous and often unfunny. He is scarcely significant as a guide. Apthorpe and "Jumbo" Trotter are more properly the slapstick augusts.

Apthorpe and Guy are thrown together largely by similarity in age. Although he is occasionally a good companion, his escapades with his thunder-box and the manner of his death create problems for Guy. Most crucial is Apthorpe's request that Guy deliver his vast accumulation of worldly possessions to Chatty Corner. This gives Guy a hellish possibility of roads to follow. But which?

> ...Guy set out on another stage of his pilgrimage, which had begun at the tomb of Sir Roger. Now, as then, an act of *pietas* was required of him; a spirit was to be placated. Apthorpe's gear must be retrieved and delivered before Guy was free to follow his fortunes in the King's service. His road lay backward for the next few days, to Southsand and Cornwall. 'Chatty' Corner, man of the trees, must be found, somewhere in the trackless forests of wartime England.
>
> He paused in the ante-room and turned back the pages of the Visitors' Book to the record of that guest night last December. There, immediately below Tony Box-Bender's name he found 'James Pendennis Corner'. But the column where his address or regiment should have stood, lay empty. (SH, 279)[15]

Without any address Guy is temporarily halted. Who knows which guide leads him to *The Times*? On All Souls' Day, November 2, Guy places an advertisement. Five days later Guy is relieved of his literal and legal burden.

> Guy folded the carbon paper in his field notebook and wrote:
> *Received 7 November 1940 Apthorpe's gear.*
>
> 'Sign here,' he said.
>
> Chatty took the book and studied it with his head first on one side and then on the other. Till the final moment Guy feared he would refuse. Then Chatty wrote, large and irregularly, *J.P. Corner*. Suddenly the wind dropped.

> It was a holy moment. Guy rose in silence and ritually received the book. The spirit of Apthorpe was placated. (SH, 324)

A further reference to All Souls' Day reminds the reader again of Purgatory but also, thanks to the benevolent Mr. Goodall, of the possibility of Paradise. There is a frivolous tone to the language that Waugh uses to describe him, but Mr. Goodall's purpose is entirely serious.

> It was All Soul's Day. Guy walked to church to pray for his brothers' souls - for Ivo especially; Gervase seemed far off that year, in Paradise perhaps, in the company of other good soldiers. Mr. Goodall was there, popping in and down and up and out and in again assiduously, releasing *toties quoties* soul after soul from Purgatory.
>
> 'Twenty-eight so far,' he said. 'I always try and do fifty.'
>
> The wings of the ransomed beat all about Mr. Goodall, but as Guy left the church he was alone in the comfortless wind. (SH, 303-04)

Mr. Goodall features largely, though briefly, in Guy's life. He is not one of Guy's guides, but he is the unwitting source of one of Guy's most grotesquely stupid tribulations. Before All Souls' Day Mr. Goodall had met Guy and invited him to become a temporary member of the Southsand Yacht Club--an occasional pleasant relief from the miseries of the billet at Kut-al-Imara. Following a dinner which Guy has offered him at Garibaldi's, Mr. Goodall, "very slightly flown with wine" (SH, 154), recounts a story which makes a strong impression on Guy:

> ...the wretched [wife] eloped with a neighbour.... It was before divorce was common. Anyway they *were* divorced and this woman married this man.... Then ten years later your kinsman met this woman alone, abroad. A kind of rapprochement occurred but she went back to her so-called husband and in due time bore a son. It was in fact your kinsman's. It was by law the so-called husband's who recognized it as his.... And so under another and quite uninteresting name a great family has been preserved. (SH, 134-35)

Prompted by Mr. Goodall's story, but, of course, in no way encouraged by him, Guy makes a ludicrous, and foiled, attempt to resume sexual relations with his former wife. Just as she is

about to succumb, a series of phone calls from a drunken Apthorpe re-activates her brain. Virginia moves from compliance to rage: "...I was the only woman in the whole world your priests would let you go to bed with. That was my attraction. You wet, smug, obscene, pompous, sexless, lunatic pig..." (SH, 148-49). Later, to add injury to the insults Guy so richly deserved, Virginia becomes pregnant by her former hairdresser on the Aquitania, now masquerading as a soldier, Trimmer. The fruit of this union is vital to the conclusion of *Sword of Honour* and is more appropriately considered later.

> More, however, needs to be said about Mr. Goodall, in light of Heath's comments:
>
> > apparently reliable Goodall proves to bear the tell-tale Waughian marks of error. Although he is a student of English Catholicism in penal times and is a former teacher of Church history he is a convert; before becoming a Roman Catholic he was an Anglo-Catholic.... Waugh's Chesterbelloc is unrealistic in the performance of his new faith. He prays, "popping in and down and up and out and in again assiduously, releasing *toties quoties* soul after soul from purgatory...." Mr. Goodall is an enthusiast who lacks a well-developed sense of evil. As he speaks he is "flown with wine...." (He, 224-25)

Does Heath really mean that the fact that Goodall is a convert is one of the "Waughian marks of error"? Waugh himself was a convert, and had been an Anglo-Catholic, as Goodall had been, in his boyhood. So had Cardinal Newman, Gerard Manley Hopkins, and Waugh's great friend, Monsignor Ronald Knox, converts all. Heath also implies, perhaps accidentally, that Mr. Goodall's faith is new to him. Obviously he was born an Anglo-Catholic, but he has been a practising *Roman* Catholic for years. His faith has none of the newness of the recently converted Charles Ryder. Presumably Heath finds Mr. Goodall's "popping in," and the number of souls he hopes to release from Purgatory, "unrealistic." However one should remember the language and the assiduity of another of Waugh's characters, probably the most deeply and fervently Catholic, apart from Mr. Crouchback--Cordelia Flyte. "'We must have the Blessed Sacrament here,' said Cordelia. 'I like popping in at odd times; so does

mummy'" (BR, 108). So, even, does Bridey! And when Cordelia offers to pray for Charles "I can't spare you a whole rosary you know. Just a decade. I've got such a long list of people. I take them in order and they get a decade about once a week" (BR, 108). Further, to describe Goodall as "an enthusiast" sits oddly with Monsignor Knox's use of the term in his book, *Enthusiasm* (1950), dedicated to Waugh.

Following Guy's attempt at reunion with Virginia he is even more lost in a spiritual wilderness. Another guide, a maleficent one, appears. He is Lieutenant-Colonel Ben Ritchie-Hook, the one-eyed monster through whom Waugh overtly introduces Dante into *Sword of Honour*. As a guide Ritchie-Hook is far more dangerous than Apthorpe. He is Guy's senior in military rank; he is also totally irresponsible. He sneaks on board a boat bound for a military exercise in Dakar, thus compromising Guy, the supposed leader. He is wounded, and he brings back a souvenir, a severed head, with which Guy is left to deal. The wound is, for Ritchie-Hook, another badge of honour. The disgrace and the disposal of the "coco-nut" are left to Guy.

> 'Get my leg out straight,' said Brigadier Ritchie-Hook. 'And give me a field-dressing someone. It's nothing much but it hurts like the devil and it's bleeding too much. And take care of the coco-nut.'
>
> Then Ritchie-Hook busied himself with his wound but not before he had laid in Guy's lap the wet, curly head of a Negro.
>
> And Guy was so weary that he fell asleep, nursing the trophy. The whole patrol was asleep by the time they reached the ship. (SH, 244)

Guy's fourth guide is Colonel "Jumbo" Trotter, who retired from the army in 1936, but with "sublime imperturbability" eases himself, unofficially, back into service. He proves more obviously helpful to Guy than previous guides. He has access to transport for Apthorpe's gear, to cars and clubs. However, he can do only so much for Guy, who stumbles on the path of his pilgrimage through Purgatory:

> ...Jumbo...said 'Strictly speaking I suppose you aren't "in transit" any more.'
>
> 'I hope I am.'
>
> 'Well, anyway, stay on here as long as you like. We'll find a way of covering you in the returns....'
>
> But it was not for this that he had dedicated himself on the sword of Roger of Waybroke that hopeful morning four years back. (SH, 549)

Guy's purgatorial sufferings begin as mere pin-pricks, and are mildly amusing. But they form a crescendo which reaches a climax as Guy hears Mme. Kanyi unknowingly, condemn him. As he leaves Santa Dulcina a pin stabs. "Then with a fuss Josefina brought him a large ornamental cake which had been made in celebration of his departure. His slight appetite was already satisfied. He watched with alarm as Josefina carved" (SH, 17). Others are longer-lasting shames:

> In the following fortnight Guy came to spend much of the day at Bellamy's. He moved to an hotel and immediately after breakfast walked to St. James's Street as a man might go to his office. He wrote letters there, a thick batch of them every day, written shamefacedly with growing facility in a corner of the morning room. (SH, 27)

(It is worth noting that, as was mentioned earlier, Bellamy's is the club for Waugh's more virtuous characters.) Guy also suffers physically, his knee, so often used for prayer and confession becoming, as the result first of a mess game, and then of a badly performed parachute jump, his weak point. "But in the morning, when he awoke from deep sleep, his knee was swollen large and he could not walk with it..." (SH, 89):

> ...it was not the place to spend day and night - particularly such nights as Guy now suffered, made almost sleepless by the throb and dead weight of his plastered knee.... Guy was not seriously injured - something had been cracked, something else twisted out of place; he was in slightly worse condition than he had been after the Halberdier guest night; no more than that - but he was hampered and in pain. His calf and ankle were swollen by the constriction of the plaster.... The swelling of calf and ankle slightly subsided; the knee grew huge. Instead of a continuous ache Guy suffered frequent agonizing spasms when he moved in the bed. (SH, 665-66)

The enormous cake which began his journey so badly suggests that food, in one way or another, is going to be part of his Purgatory. Arriving at Kut-al-Imara House where the Halberdiers are to be billeted, Guy discovers not only no soap and no hot water, but a disgusting meal: "There were dishes of margarine, sliced bread, huge bluish potatoes and a kind of drab galantine which Guy seemed to remember, but without relish, from his school-days during the First World War. On a side table an urn stood in a pool of tea, dripping" (SH, 100). Later at a club his chance for reasonably good food is snatched away from him: "Guy got the last leg of chicken but a rear-admiral deftly whisked it off his plate. Presently he emerged victualled in accordance with his rank with bully beef and beetroot" (SH, 307).

Guy's military performance brings more blame than praise, for example:

> The major led Guy aside and said gravely: 'That was a very poor show, Crouchback. What on earth went wrong?'
> 'I don't know, sir. The visibility was rather poor.'
> 'It was the same for everyone. You'll have to work hard at elementary aiming. You put up a very poor show today.' (SH, 116-17)

A small kindness on Guy's part also leads to catastrophe. Visiting the feverish and whisky-sodden Apthorpe in hospital, Guy slips a bottle of the patient's favourite drink to him, to hide under the bed-clothes. Next day Apthorpe is found dead beside the empty bottle, and it becomes clear that Guy is yet again in serious trouble, no matter what his motive:

> 'Apthorpe is dead,' he said briefly. 'I want to talk to you, Crouchback, after lunch.'
> Guy supposed the summons was connected with his move-order and went to the brigadier's office without alarm. He found both the brigadier and the brigade major there, one looking angrily at him, the other at the table.
> 'You heard that Apthorpe was dead?'
> 'Yes, sir.'
> 'There was an empty whisky bottle in his bed. Does that mean anything to you?'
> Guy stood silent, aghast rather than ashamed.
> 'I asked "Does that mean anything to you?"'
> 'Yes, sir. I took him a bottle yesterday afternoon.'

> 'You knew it was against orders?'
> 'Yes, sir.' (SH, 259)

For a short time at least, it appears that at last he will be able to make a particularly useful contribution to the war effort on the Italian front. As a longtime resident of Italy, Guy speaks fluent Italian. He is interviewed to test the quality of his Italian. The interview turns into farce when it becomes obvious that Guy's Italian far outclasses his examiner's. A chance to find a way out of the Purgatory of uselessness is, because of a colonel's incompetence, missed. Some time later Guy is actually forbidden to work in Italy, one of the few places where his talents could truly be used. "This officer cannot be recommended for secret work in Italy..." (SH, 671).

Attempts at doing both his Catholic and military duty add to Guy's miseries. Guy comes upon

> a young English soldier who lay on a stretcher motionless. The girls pointed helplessly towards this figure. Guy could not help. The young man was dead, undamaged it seemed. He lay as though at rest. The few corpses which Guy had seen in Crete had sprawled awkwardly. This soldier lay like an effigy on a tomb - like Sir Roger in his shadowy shrine at Santa Dulcina. Only the bluebottles that clustered round his lips and eyes proclaimed that he was flesh.... Meanwhile, lacking words the three of them stood by the body, stiff and mute as figures in a sculptured Deposition.... A precept came to Guy's mind from his military education. 'The officer in command of a burial party is responsible for collecting the red identity discs and forwarding them to Records. The green disc remains on the body. If in doubt, gentlemen, remember that green is the colour of putrefaction.'
>
> Guy knelt and took the disc from the cold breast. He read a number, a name, a designation, R.C. 'May his soul and the souls of all the faithful departed, in the mercy of God, rest in peace.' (SH, 490-91)

Littlewood comments extensively and usefully on Waugh's image here:

> Waugh's image of the three of them as figures in a sculptured Deposition sustains the impression that however dismal the occurrence, it is something that exists within the structure of Christianity. These references...function in the same way as Waugh's repeated references to the unfolding of the Christian year. Throughout the trilogy military and political events are constantly being

> set within the framework of the Christian calendar. Guy's performance of his duties as an officer is counterpointed within the performance of his duties as a Christian, and in so far as the two diverge it is clear that his primary allegiance is to the latter....the episode we have quoted is a model of Waugh's procedure in the trilogy. His own experiences are taken over with what are often only minor changes, but they are set against a Christian framework which mitigates their attendant desolation. (Li, 194-95)

The commentary has one flaw, the repetition of the words "Christian" and "Christianity." They should be "Catholic" an "Catholicism," as Douglas Woodruff confirms. Woodruff, Waugh's long-time friend, in 1932 bought a house where Edmund Campion had hidden; Waugh saw the house that year. "This began an interest in the English martyrs which continued and nourished an anti-ecumenical spirit which always filled him and made him very pointedly restrict the term of Christian to Catholic" (EWHW, 122).

Crete, for Guy, is not simply a place where he experiences a reworking of the scene at Golgotha. It is, in Rutherford's words, "that nether world of Crete as Waugh so brilliantly portrays it - that inferno of defeat, disorder, shame" (R, 127). Dante and oblique reminders of Purgatory reappear. Later, clutching the red identity disc almost as a talisman, Guy calls upon his holy mentor for help:

> There was one clear moment of revelation between great voids when Guy discovered himself holding in his hand, not, as he supposed, Gervase's medal, but the red identity disc of an unknown soldier, and heard himself saying preposterously: 'Saint Roger of Waybroke defend us in the day of battle and be our safeguard against the wickedness and snares of the devil....' (SH, 517)

Guy is preserved from destruction, though not from more suffering, when he attempts to deal with the red disc:

> Later than night, as Guy packed, he found the red identity disc he had carried out of Crete. He did not know the correct procedure, where he should send it, how addressed. Finally he wrote on a sheet of Mrs. Stitch's thick paper: *'Taken from the body of a British soldier killed in Crete. Exact position of grave unknown,'* folded it unsigned and addressed the envelope

> simply G.H.Q.M.E. Eventually, he supposed, it would reach the right department.
>
> But the next morning when he found Mrs. Stitch up and dressed and waiting to see him off, he thought of a more satisfactory way of paying his debt.
>
> 'Julia,' he said, 'do you think Algie could possibly get one of his staff to deal with this for me?'
>
> 'Of course. What is it?'
>
> 'Just a bit of unfinished business from Crete. I don't know the right man to send it to. Algie's secretary will know.'
>
> Mrs. Stitch took the envelope. She noted the address. Then she fondly kissed Guy.
>
> As he drove away she waved the envelope; then turned indoors and dropped it into a waste paper basket. (SH, 536)

Guy's Catholic and moral rightness is completely blotted out, at least in practical terms, by Mrs. Stitch's action. It is a betrayal of unconscious cruelty, even if Guy is unaware of it.

Eventually Guy returns to England and Virginia, who "informed him, without any extenuation or plea for compassion, curtly almost, that she was with child by Trimmer" (SH, 695)--another blow to Guy's ever-diminishing pride, and another stumble on his path through Purgatory. But it also marks the beginning of spiritual health, as human pride dissipates.

Guy's penitential journey is changing him. Eventually he decides that his only proper course of action is to remarry the now converted Virginia. This will be a civil ceremony, for, in the eyes of the Church, they are still man and wife. Guy's intentions are to help Virginia, and to give Trimmer's child a father, legitimate in terms of English law. These are very different motives from those of his attempt to seduce Virginia earlier. In addition, the fact that Guy is willing to "father" the child of the obnoxious Trimmer suggests that he is beginning to learn the lesson of public charity. He takes back a extravagantly unfaithful wife, whose name is deeply ironic, not in a spirit of heroism, anymore than he is willing to be little

Trimmer's father for heroic reasons. He is learning to do the right thing. But this does not mean, for Waugh or the already dead Mr. Crouchback, that there is now to be an acceptable male heir to the Crouchback family and faith.

Why is little Trimmer unacceptable? Guy's marriage to Virginia was, in Catholic terms, never invalidated. Had his attempted seduction of her succeeded and a child been born it would have been, as in Mr. Goodall's story, legitimate according to canon law. By the same token, Virginia's relationship with Trimmer was canonically adulterous, their child a bastard. Virginia and the odious Trimmer engaged in what is described in the novel as increasingly bored and boring fornication, the outcome being little Trimmer. Guy, *per caritas*, gave the child a father and a home. But charity does not make for canonical legitimacy. Waugh clearly suggests this in a letter to Anthony Powell written in 1961, after *Unconditional Surrender* was first published:

> I am disconcerted to find that I have given the general impression of a 'happy ending'. This was far from my intention. The mistake was allowing Guy legitimate offspring. They shall be deleted from any subsequent edition. I thought it more ironical that there should be *real heirs* [my emphasis] of the Blessed Gervase Crouchback dispossessed by Trimmer but plainly I failed to make that clear. So no nippers for Guy & Domenica in Penguin. (L, 579)

The original ending to *Unconditional Surrender* (1961), in manuscript and in the Chapman and Hall first edition, allowed Guy two sons by the unimpeachably Catholic Domenica Plessington. Virginia's death in an air raid made this marriage possible, and provided two heirs as unimpeachably Catholic as their parents.[16] Little Trimmer is of loosely Protestant stock, without even the advantage of being conceived with love. It is no accident that Waugh's narrator never uses little Trimmer's Christian name, and refers to him as though he were nothing more than a shrunken version of his natural father.

Once remarried, Guy is posted to Yugoslavia, and is still there when "Virginia's son was born on June 4th, the day the allied armies entered Rome" (SH, 733). How painfully clear Waugh makes it that the son is Virginia's alone, not Guy's, physically.

In Yugoslavia Guy is beset by one of his greatest trials so far--the wish to die.[17] To this state has his journey through Purgatory brought him:

> In his idleness Guy went to the old town where he found a dilapidated romanesque church where a priest was hearing confessions. Guy waited, took his turn and at length said: 'Father I wish to die.'
>
> 'Yes. How many times?'
>
> 'Almost all the time.'
>
> The obscure figure behind the grill leant nearer. 'What was it you wished to do?'
>
> 'To die.'
>
> 'Yes. You have attempted suicide?'
>
> 'No.'
>
> 'Of what, then are you accusing yourself? To wish to die is quite usual today. It may even be a very good disposition. You do not accuse yourself of despair?'
>
> 'No father; presumption. I am not fit to die.'
>
> 'There is no sin there. This is a mere scruple. Make an act of contrition for all the unrepented sins of your past life.' (SH, 718)

Guy's feeling of unfitness for death is the result of his belief that his place is in Purgatory for all time. He feels helpless and hopeless, and his duties attempting to relocate a collection of displaced persons seem fruitless. Briefly, to emphasise his "presumption," Guy has a vainglorious sense that he can lead these displaced Jews to a promised land: "It seemed to Guy, in the fanciful mood that his lonely state engendered, that he was playing an ancient, historic role as he went with Bakic to inform the Jews of their approaching exodus. He was Moses leading a people out of captivity" (SH, 781). This sin of pride is almost immediately punished in a conversation with one of the refugees, Mme. Kanyi, and by his subsequent return to England:

> 'Is there any place that is free from evil? It is too simple to say that only the Nazis wanted war. These communists wanted it too. It was the only way in which they could come to power. Many of my people wanted it, to be revenged on the Germans, to hasten the creation of the national state. It seems to me there was a will to war, a death wish, everywhere. Even good men thought their private honour would be satisfied by war. They could assert their manhood by killing and being killed. They would accept hardships in recompense for having been selfish and lazy. Danger justified privilege. I knew Italians - not very many perhaps - who felt this. Were there none in England?'
>
> 'God forgive me,' said Guy. 'I was one of them.'
>
> He had come to the end of the crusade to which he had devoted himself on the tomb of Sir Roger. His life as a Halberdier was over. All the stamping of the barrack square and the biffing of imaginary strongholds were finding their consummation in one frustrated act of mercy. He left Begoy without valediction save for the formal application at general headquarters for leave to travel. He took his small staff with him. His last act was to send by the hand of his orderly the pile of illustrated magazines to Mme. Kanyi. He gave the widows the remains of his stores. They wept. (SH, 788)

He returns to an England that seems to have as little to offer him as he has to offer his country. However, his purgatorial years have, at last, cleansed him to the point that he can, for charity's sake, do some good and become more like his father.

Virginia has shown little interest in her child, who has been sent to the country for safety. It is looked after by the Catholic convert, Eloise Plessington, and her Catholic-born daughter, Domenica. The child is safely in the country when Virginia and Guy's Uncle Peregrine are both killed by a bomb. Little Gervase, as Trimmer's child is called, now has only an adopted father. Domenica becomes attached to the child as she helps take care of him, and Guy, now free to marry again within the Church, becomes fond of, and then marries, Domenica.

At the conclusion of *Unconditional Surrender* the marriage is not only happy, but Guy and Domenica produce two sons, absolutely proper and blood members of the Church, and legitimate heirs to the Crouchback name. This ending removes Guy from Purgatory, and sets

him at the gate of an earthly Paradise. He is no longer *fin de ligne*. Also, if my thesis about *Brideshead Revisited* is given credence, the fact that Guy's wife is called Domenica (Italian for Sunday) may mean that the Easter which never arrived in *Brideshead* has come. For Waugh all is almost set to rights. The great holy day may be celebrated again.

However, when Waugh changed the ending of *Sword of Honour*, in 1964-65, the change had enormous and dreadful ramifications. Guy and Domenica remain childless, though they bring little Trimmer up as their own. The child may be called Crouchback; he may remain a member of the Catholic Church. But in Waugh's eyes, and even in the spirit of charitable Mr. Crouchback, he is tainted. Waugh will not let the reader forget that he was conceived in bored lust and that the natural father was one of his most deceitful and faithless creations. This ending is, I believe, a clear indication of Waugh's lament for the Catholic Church, a Church which continues, but is weakened and undercut by the activities of the reformers that little Trimmer has come to represent, in part because of his appalling father, and in part because he interferes with the proper course of Crouchback history.

Waugh found communal rather than private devotions disturbing and improper, and above all he saw as perverse the modification of the liturgy and the replacement of Latin by the vernacular. Trimmer is the vernacular incarnate, especially if the idea of "class jargon" is borne in mind. He also transmutes himself frequently, even within the same sentence. Trimmer, once Gustave, on occasion Ali, then McTavish, appears on the scene, "dressed in a kilt and uniform of a highland regiment. He carried a tall shepherd's staff and said in a voice that had more in it of the Great West Road than of the Pass of Glencoe, 'Sorry to hear about Angus'" (SH, 317). He is with Guy on the Isle of Mugg, in the officers' mess. "I often drop in and if there isn't a pal about, I sign another bloke's name" (SH, 318). 'Gustave McAli' is

emphatically non-U; he speaks a readily identifiable class jargon. So, of course, in their shared fashion, do Virginia, Guy's fellow officers, and, occasionally, Guy. But at least this jargon is universal to the predominant group in the book. There is Major Tickeridge, but he and his wife are generous to Mr. Crouchback, who willingly uses their language, though it fits ill with his natural speech. Trimmer is an interloper. "'Anyway, Virginia, let's have another drink here?' Virginia lived among people who used Christian names indiscriminately. It was Trimmer's self-consciousness which called attention to his familiarity" (SH, 345). The jargonless English spoken by Mr. Crouchback, Uncle Peregrine and, frequently and always privately, by Guy, is pure language not a debasement.

As has already been noted, the changes in the Church, which Trimmer represents, began long before Waugh wrote *Men at Arms* (1952). Waugh's opinion strengthened and hardened as time passed. In November 1962 Waugh wrote, "the new [liturgical] fashion is for something bright and loud and practical" (E, 606). How well, in their worst senses, do these adjectives describe Trimmer. In March 1963 Daphne Acton, a fervent convert, received a letter from Waugh:

> I am returning the tract you lent me with some very cross marginalia. I didn't like it at all. Apart from objecting to much of the theme, I thought it common and cocksure, sometimes asserting as fact what it had to prove & sometimes lapsing into commonplace. (L, 601-02)

Father Charles Davis was the author of the "tract." "Common and cocksure,..lapsing into commonplace"--this is Trimmer again. Waugh goes on to write "The worst mistake of your Fr Davis is his almost blasphemous degradation of the Mystical Body into a parish meeting" (L, 601-02). Once more, debasement; a lapse into "common place," the communal. With such a father as Trimmer, representing the wilful damage of something precious, how could

little Trimmer stand for anything but "change and decay" in a Church that must, for Waugh, remain essentially changeless?

Fiction could change and was changed, however. In the closing lines of *Unconditional Surrender*, first published by Chapman and Hall in 1961, Guy's brother-in-law, Arthur Box-Bender, speaks to a friend about Guy's family: "Now they've two boys of their own. When Domenica isn't having babies she manages the home farm at Broome." In the similar passage in the 1965 recension Box-Bender remarks, "Pity they haven't any children of their own" (SH, 796). Waugh made the corrections and changes to his three texts about to become one three years after the final volume of the trilogy was first published. He added and removed using a red ball-point pen, on a stripped copy of the first Penguin version of *Unconditional Surrender*. He struck out Guy's sons and Domenica's capacity to be a mother, and inserted "Pity they haven't any children of their own" with such force that the impression left by his pen is clearly visible through more than half a dozen pages. Gone is the wish simply to add irony to his story. Instead there is evidence of the violent grief of a man who has written "an obituary of the Roman Catholic Church...." The "real heirs of the Blessed Gervase Crouchback" Waugh wrote of to Anthony Powell are gone, Guy really is *fin de ligne*, as far as real family and true faith are concerned. Worse, little Trimmer has been given the Crouchback name, and the recension ends in a devastating reversal of Mr. Goodall's story. As he told it, "Under another and quite uninteresting name a great family has been preserved. What is more, the son married a Catholic so that *his* son is being brought up in the Church" (SH, 135). In *Sword of Honour* the name of a once great family has been bestowed on a child for whom Waugh might pray that he would be no more than uninteresting, as a desirable alternative to the prospects suggested by his paternity. It seems

that Trimmer will live on in his son, for he has great powers of survival, but no substance and virtually no history. And he is the man who symbolises the changes in the Church that Waugh considered, in both the sixteenth and twentieth centuries, criminal revolution: "The sixteenth century revolution succeeded (where it did) largely because men without religious vocations (e.g. Luther) were in monasteries. The twentieth century revolution is succeeding because men with religious vocations are outside monasteries" (D, 787). Waugh's Church is of necessity all substance and history, and it is, for him, disappearing.

Domenica's barrenness in *Sword of Honour* suggests that, in *Unconditional Surrender*, because of her name, she represented Easter Sunday. Easter, although very much a Christian feast day, and the most important celebration of the Catholic year for Waugh, is pagan both in its origins and its name. Eostre, goddess of new life, gave her name to Easter (*OED*), and was venerated particularly in the early spring, which coincides with the time of Christ's Resurrection.[18] Domenica, childless, lacks the power to give new life. She is not Easter. Her Sunday name is any Sunday, not Easter Sunday. As Cordelia Flyte said of the empty chapel at Brideshead it was "as though from now on it was always to be Good Friday" (BR, 252).

In 1965 Waugh publicly told his readers that he had written an "obituary of the Roman Catholic Church...." Privately, on Maundy Thursday, 1965, he wrote to Monsignor McReavy, a clerical "agony aunt"--here is pitiful irony--who answered queries in *Clergy Review*:

> Pray forgive me for troubling you. I do so because I am told that you are often kind enough to give expert advice to troubled laymen.
>
> When I was instructed in the Faith some 35 years ago I was told of the obligation to hear mass on the appointed days (a) that it applied only to those living within three miles of a church and that the invention of the motor-

> car had not modified this ruling and (b) that the obligation applied only from the Offertory to the Priest's Communion.
>
> Is this still the law?
>
> I do not ask what is best for me; merely what is the least that I am obliged to do without grave sin. I find the new liturgy a temptation against Faith, Hope and Charity but shall never, pray God, apostatise.
>
> I enclose an envelope for your kind reply. (L, 630-31)[19]

Anyone tempted to see this letter as the most grotesque piece of Wavian parody has only to read Waugh's penultimate paragraph to realise that it is an expression of Waugh's own Passion, as is the end of *Sword of Honour*. Both are laments for the Catholic Church, and gone now is Waugh's capacity to write fiction. His ability to be a devoted Catholic and his ability to write Catholic novels failed virtually simultaneously. His novels had been filled with gaiety, together with sardonic and sometimes cruel humour. *Decline and Fall* is replete with these. Humour is not absent from *Sword of Honour*, but the gaiety is gone, as it was gone from Waugh's life. Far more painfully than Mr. Pinfold's, Waugh's writing had gone full circle, for the end of *Sword of Honour* recalls a phrase of lamentation from *Decline and Fall*: "the mirth is turned into weeping" (DF, 178).

Conclusion

Waugh's recension of his war novels, *Sword of Honour*, published in 1965, was his last work of fiction and his last important piece of work. He published only a few short articles later. Laura Waugh, his wife, explained the cessation of writing in one so prolific and polished thus: "I would have thought it obvious that with the changes in the Church he lost all impetus for creative writing" (P, 154). In the last of his published letters, to Diana Mosley, written on March 30, 1966 less than a month before he died, Waugh said "I now cling to the Faith doggedly without joy" (L, 639). Not only his *raison d'être* but his *raison d'écrire* had failed him. "The changes in the Church" first deprived him of the power to write and then, in part, killed him. Surely this proves, in so far as literary and biographical proofs are possible, that Waugh was a Catholic novelist, a Catholic writer. Deprived of Catholic sustenance, his work and his life ceased.

Waugh died a broken and desperately unhappy man. However, the circumstances of his death, and the events immediately preceding and following it, not only have the flavour of a Wavian novel, but also suggest, for those who share Waugh's faith, that God was on Waugh's side, as Waugh believed He was on Lady Marchmain's. He died on Easter Sunday, April 10, 1966, having heard Mass conducted privately by Father Philip Caraman, in the Tridentine rite (S, 591). He returned home, apparently at peace, and died shortly afterwards. Father Caraman administered the Last Rites. Graham Greene, the first person to record the manner of his death, commented "A writer's old age can be very strange. Sometimes it's like his books: Evelyn Waugh, who had made such fun of Apthorpe's 'thunder-box,' died in the w.c."[1] Sykes is rather mealy-mouthed about this. He writes that "some time in the morning Evelyn went to the back parts of the house. While there he had occasion to raise his arms

and this gesture brought on an instant and instantly fatal heart attack" (S, 591). Heath repeats Sykes' "discreet" account (He, 270).

Waugh's death seems to be God's joke and God's deathday gift to him. The joke is obvious, the gift less so. Waugh's Wavian death was, surely, a reminder that life could be funny and, perhaps, that there is humour in heaven. Waugh needed to be told by an important authority that fun and the funny existed still. His death, like his novels, combined hilarity, in this case slightly gruesome, and pathos. God's gift was, simply, longed-for death.

Waugh's Requiem Mass was sung, again in the Tridentine rite, on April 21, 1966, "after some protest by the Catholic authorities" (S, 593). The protest and the victory would have pleased Waugh. Laura told Lady Diana Cooper, a belovèd friend, "Don't worry...he is totally happy to be dead" (He, 270).

It would be impertinent to do more than hope that, like Mr. Crouchback, Waugh was "not long for purgatory" (SH 601). However, it is difficult not to wish that Waugh has reached heaven, has heard that, since early 1991 the Tridentine rite and Latin are again acceptable, with the permission of appropriate bishops,[2] and that he has become an ethereal rather than a terrestrial Catholic novelist, writing a book called *The Weeping is Turned into Mirth!*

POSTSCRIPT

Dómine Jesu Christe, Rex glóriæ, líbera ánimas ómnium fidélium defunctórum de pœnis inférni, et de profúndo lacu: líbera eas de ore leónis, ne absórbeat eas tártarus, ne cadant in obscúrum: sed sígnifer sanctus Míchaël repræséntet eas in lucem sanctam:...

In Missis Quotidianis Defunctorum

"C'è scappata la mucca."

Sword of Honour

Death, Judgement, Heaven, Hell,
and Spring. The Five Last Things,...

"Eschatology of Spring"
Phyllis Webb

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER I

Introduction

[1] Marie-Françoise Allain, *Conversations With Graham Greene* (London: Penguin, 1991), pp. 159-60. This was first published in 1979 and translated in 1983 as *The Other Man*. Here Greene repeats a point he has already made in the second volume of his autobiography, *Ways of Escape* (1980; rpt. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1981), p. 58.

[2] Graham Greene, "Evelyn Waugh," *The Times* [London], April 15, 1966, n.p.

[3] Allain, *Conversations*, p. 170.

[4] Allain, *Conversations*, p. 171.

[5] Philip Stratford, *Faith and Fiction: Creative Process in Greene and Mauriac* (Notre Dame, IN: U of Notre Dame P, 1964), p. 240.

[6] Greene commented to Waugh, "A small point - I did not regard Scobie as a saint, and his offering his damnation up was intended to show how muddled a man of goodwill could become once 'off the rails'" (L, 280). Waugh sent a correcting letter to *The Tablet*. Greene had not, however, taken serious issue with Waugh who had written, "I am delighted that you did not take the review amiss. My admiration for the book is..." (L, 280).

[7] Evelyn Waugh. *Decline and Fall* (1928; rpt. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1983).

[8] -----. *Vile Bodies* (1930; rpt. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1982).

[9] -----. *Black Mischief* (1932; rpt. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1984).

[10] -----. *A Handful of Dust* (1934; rpt. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1981).

[11] -----. *Scoop: A Novel About Journalists* (1938; rpt. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1982).

[12] -----. *Put Out More Flags* (1942; rpt. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1984).

[13] -----. *Brideshead Revisited: The Sacred and Profane Memories of Captain Charles Ryder* (1945; rpt. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1981).

[14] -----. *The Loved One* (1948; rpt. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1981).

[15] -----. *Helena* (1950; rpt. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1982).

[16] -----. *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* (1957; rpt. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1982).

[17] -----. *Sword of Honour* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1965).

[18] -----. *Men At Arms* (1952; rpt. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1982).

[19] -----. *Officers and Gentlemen* (1955; rpt. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1982).

[20] -----. *Unconditional Surrender* (1961; rpt. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1983).

[21] -----. *The End of the Battle* (New York: Little, Brown, 1961).

[22] -----. *Work Suspended and Other Stories* (1942; rpt. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1982).

[23] This critical opinion is exemplified by Stopp, Sykes and Davis, whose opinions of *Work Suspended* are to be examined in Chapter Two. *Work Suspended* and all of Waugh's novels in this thesis, except *Sword of Honour*, have been examined in easily accessible Penguin versions. With the exception of *Brideshead Revisited*, the text of which is considered at some length in Chapter Three, and *Sword of Honour*, the Penguin editions are identical to the corresponding revised Chapman and Hall editions.

[24] *Face to Face*, interview with John Freeman, B.B.C., 26 June 1960.

[25] Phillips does not record the date of this letter.

[26] John Harthan, *Books of Hours and Their Owners* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977), p. 11.

[27] Harthan, *Books*, p. 11.

[28] John XXIII's actions so disturbed Waugh that one has the sense that his suggestion to Ann Fleming is only partly facetious: "I suffer far more than you can understand by the present degradation of the Church. I will pay Caspar's [A.F.'s son] single fare (first class) if he will go to New York to assassinate the Pope." from *Letters of Ann Fleming*, p. 370, quoted in Artemis Cooper, ed. *Mr Wu and Mrs Stitch: The Letters of Evelyn Waugh and Diana Cooper* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1991), p. 322, n. 3.

[29] Austin Flannery, O.P., ed., *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1975), p. 1. A footnote in another edition of the documents points out that, "The Catholic inclination to accept all religious practices as unchangeable is...given a sharp and much needed corrective. There are, indeed, unchangeable elements in the liturgy, but others 'may and ought to be changed.'" From

William M. Abbott, S.J., ed., *The Documents of Vatican II* (New York: Guild Press, 1966), p. 146, n. 23. Clearly Waugh was not alone in his opinions.

[30] Waugh himself explained rather more tactfully, "It is my misfortune to be quite insensible to music." *Remote People: A Report From Ethiopia and British Africa, 1930-31* (1931; rpt. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1985), p. 21.

[31] Frederick J. Stopp, *Evelyn Waugh: Portrait of an Artist* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1958), pp. 47-48.

[32] Alvin B. Kernan, "Running in Circles" in *The Plot of Satire* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1965), p. 167. This is a revised and expanded version of "The Wall and the Jungle," *Yale Review*, 43 (1964), pp. 199-220.

[33] A.A. DeVitis, *Roman Holiday: The Catholic Novels of Evelyn Waugh* (London: Vision, 1958). In spite of the apparently valuable title, I have made little use of DeVitis's work. It is on a small scale, and has had very little influence on subsequent criticism of Waugh's works.

[34] *The Diaries of Evelyn Waugh*, ed. Michael Davie (1976, rpt. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1982).

[35] Frances Donaldson, *Evelyn Waugh: Portrait of a Country Neighbour*, 2nd ed. (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1985), pp. vii-viii.

[36] *The Letters of Evelyn Waugh*, ed. Mark Amory (1980; rpt. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1982). The *Letters* are an invaluable source of an enormous variety of information. Dozens of prizes may be pulled from the magnificent bran tub of surprises that seems an apt description for Waugh's letters. They are also often extraordinarily funny. Unfortunately many of the finds do not fit with the theme of this thesis, even when they throw light on Waugh's novels. For example, to discover that Laura was an enthusiastic purchaser and keeper of cows, mostly named, and that Waugh helped her with these activities, throws new light on a tiny portion of *Sword of Honour*. In 1950, whilst Laura was away, Waugh wrote to her reporting "Much escapism among cattle" (L, 390). Early in *Sword of Honour*, describing the activities of the peasants inhabiting the cottages behind the Castello, Waugh writes "they kept an almost etiolated cow in an underground stable from which sometimes she escaped and trampled the vegetable beds and plunged over low walls until she was, with immense drama, recaptured" (SH, 17). Later on Waugh's glamorous Mrs. Stitch (a near real portrait of Lady Diana Cooper) once witness to the dramatic event, joins the chase and proclaims loudly "in rich Genoese accents...: 'C'è scappata la mucca'" (SH, 400). The escape, with servants "bound[ing] over the parapet" (SH, 370) happened whilst Mrs. Stitch was visiting the Crouchbacks. All at once, a piece of slapstick comedy becomes a private joke or an almost hidden love note to Laura.

[37] Heath also consistently refers to Brideshead *House* (He, 164, 165, 166, 167 twice, 173), rather than Brideshead *Castle*, even though Sebastian writes a letter to Ryder dated from Brideshead Castle (BR, 86), and Ryder actually asks, "Why is this house called a 'Castle'?" (BR, 94).

[38] Bruce Stovel, "Waugh at Play", *Ariel*, 14 No. 3 (1983), p. 73.

[39] Stovel, "Waugh at Play," p. 74.

[40] Robert Murray Davis, *Evelyn Waugh: Writer* (Norman, OK: Pilgrim, 1981).

[41] Ian Littlewood, *The Writings of Evelyn Waugh* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983).

[42] George McCartney, *Confused Roaring: Evelyn Waugh and the Modernist Tradition* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1987).

[43] Robert Murray Davis, *Evelyn Waugh and the Forms of His Time* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic U of America P, 1989), p. x.

[44] Donat Gallagher, ed., *The Essays, Articles and Reviews of Evelyn Waugh* (London: Methuen, 1983).

[45] Jacqueline McDonnell, *Waugh On Women* (London: Duckworth, 1986).

[46] Paul Doyle, *A Reader's Companion to the Novels and Short Stories of Evelyn Waugh: An Annotated Glossary of the Narratives, A Who's Who Among the Characters, A Gazeteer of the Principal Places, A Description of the Important Proper Names, and an Explanation of Abbreviations Used in the Stories* (Norman, OK: Pilgrim, 1988).

[47] Doyle, p. 56.

[48] Humphrey Carpenter, *The Brideshead Generation: Evelyn Waugh and His Friends* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1990).

[49] William Myers, *Evelyn Waugh and the Problem of Evil* (London: Faber, 1991), p. xi.

[50] Myers, p. 87.

[51] By chance I used the same *Dictionary of Saints* as Waugh, though in a later edition.

[52] W.H. Auden, "Reading," in *The Dyer's Hand* (New York: Vintage, 1988), p. 8. At first I simply believed borrowing a critical approach from Auden would be both appropriate and ironic, as I entirely acknowledge Waugh's greater importance, but took pleasure in the chance to explicate Waugh following the much satirised Auden's lead. Waugh repeatedly introduced Auden as Parsnip in, for example, *Put Out More Flags*. However, it was a greater pleasure to discover that when Waugh finally met Auden in 1948 at a party in New York he felt obliged to write to Laura, his wife, "I forgot to tell you that I met the notorious poet Auden at Mrs. Fremantle's and rather liked him" (L, 290).

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER II

Waugh's Early Novels: From catholic to Catholic

[1] Evelyn Waugh, "Cruise" in *Work Suspended and Other Stories* (1932; rpt. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1982), pp. 16-22.

[2] I have seen the "Face to Face" interview three times. It was part of a tribute to Evelyn Waugh at the National Portrait Gallery in London, in December, 1989. Jeffrey Heath quotes exactly from a transcript available from the BBC, and I have cited him as the source.

[3] Alec Waugh, "My Brother Evelyn," in *My Brother Evelyn and Other Profiles* (London: Cassell, 1967), pp. 166-67. Bouchier should read Bourchier.

[4] Martin Stannard, "'Work Suspended': Waugh's Climacteric," *Essays in Criticism*, 28, No. 4 (1978), p. 308.

[5] This was checked in *Cruden's Concordance*, *The Complete Concordance to the Bible*, *Eerdman's Analytic Concordance*, and *Young's Analytic Concordance*.

[6] Malcolm Bradbury, *Evelyn Waugh* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1964), pp. 33-64, *passim*.

[7] This title appears to be Waugh's invention; it was not found in either the British Museum *Catalogue* or the *Union Catalog* of the Library of Congress.

[8] According to Harold Acton, *More Memoirs of an Aesthete* (1970, rpt. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1982), p. 318, "John Sutro had coined the adjective 'Wavian,' as Shavian applied to Shaw...." I have chosen to use Sutro's term because 'Waughian' is clumsy, and what is appropriate for Shaw seems no less so for Waugh, even if the spellings "aw" and "augh" differ.

[9] Robert Murray Davis et al., *A Bibliography of Evelyn Waugh* (Troy, NY: Whitston, 1986), pp. 3-5.

[10] All the biblical quotations have been taken from the King James' Bible. Waugh thought that the Douai version "carries a strong flavour of St. Jerome's Latin but is, as English, uncouth..." (E, 353). Even without this information, the King James' translation would seem the better choice as, given Waugh's childhood and adolescence, its language must have been in his blood.

[11] Martin Stannard, *Evelyn Waugh: The Early Years 1903-1939* (London: J.M. Dent, 1986), p. 201.

[12] Paul Doyle, *A Reader's Companion to the Novels and Short Stories of Evelyn Waugh* (Norman, OK: Pilgrim, 1988), p. 17.

[13] T.S. Eliot, *Selected Poems* (London: Faber, 1954), "Notes," p. 74.

[14] Eliot, *Poems*, p. 51. Waugh's title, *A Handful of Dust* is, of course, taken from "The Waste Land."

[15] Stannard, *Early Years*, p. 206.

[16] Alec Waugh, "My Brother Evelyn," p. 194.

[17] Evelyn Waugh, *Remote People* (1931; rpt. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1985), p. 11.

[18] S.J.P. Van Dijk and J. Hazelden Walker, *The Origins of the Modern Roman Liturgy: The Liturgy of the Papal Court and the Franciscan Order in the Thirteenth Century* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1960), p. 397, n. 6.

[19] Waugh, *Remote*, p. 40.

[20] A.A. DeVitis, *Roman Holiday: The Catholic Novels of Evelyn Waugh* (London: Vision, 1958), p. 39.

[21] Stannard, *Early Years*, p. 490.

[22] Rather sadly, for Waugh, a critic/novelist who has written about him, David Lodge, has used the idea of events precipitated by a car accident to the protagonist's father to better and more entertaining effect in his most recent novel, *Paradise News* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1991).

[23] Stannard, *Early Years*, p. 491.

[24] Stannard, "'Work Suspended'", p. 319.

[25] Graham Greene, *Collected Essays* (1969, rpt. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1985), p. 91.

[26] Marie-Françoise Allain, *Conversations With Graham Greene*, trans. Guido Waldman (London: Penguin, 1991), p. 162.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER III

Brideshead Revisited: Anti-Hero and False Faith

[1] A.A. DeVitis, *Roman Holiday: The Catholic Novels of Evelyn Waugh* (London: Vision, 1958), p. 46.

[2] The epigraph to the manuscript of *Brideshead Revisited* reads "Non hinc habemus manentem civitatem." It is from the *Vulgate* and in the King James' version of the *Bible* is "For here have we no continuing city...." Hebrews xiii.14. One wonders if this suggests that Waugh always had doubts about the positive elements of *Brideshead*.

[3] Waugh met an unattractive character really called Boy in Nairobi in 1930/31. He was "a whiskered cattle rancher, very tall and swarthy, in the clothes of a Mexican bandit;..his wife is slight and smart, with enormous eyes and an adventurous past..." (*Remote People*, p.137). The wife, Genessie, sounds like Celia Ryder, née Mulcaster.

[4] Edmund Wilson, *Classics and Commercials: A Literary Chronicle of the Forties* (New York: Farrar, Straus, 1950), pp. 299-300.

[5] James F. Carens, *The Satiric Art of Evelyn Waugh* (Seattle: U of Washington P, 1966), p. 98.

[6] David Lodge, *Evelyn Waugh* (New York: Columbia UP, 1971), p. 34.

[7] Joseph Hynes, "Two Affairs Revisited," *Twentieth Century Literature*, 33, No. 2 (1987), p. 238.

[8] "Theology," OED, 1979.

[9] In part this extract, too complex to explicate here, deals with the transfiguring, saving wind of Pentecost.

[10] Bernard Bergonzi, "Evelyn Waugh's Gentlemen," in *Evelyn Waugh*, ed. Robert Murray Davis (St. Louis: B. Herder, n.d.), p. 79. First published in *Critical Quarterly* 28 (1963), pp. 23-36.

[11] Thomas Churchill, "The trouble with 'Brideshead Revisited,'" *MLQ* 28 (1967), p. 214.

[12] "St. Benedict Labre," *The Penguin Dictionary of Saints* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1965), p. 64.

[13] "St. Sebastian," *Saints*, 1965, p. 304.

[14] "St. Aloysius," *Saints*, 1965, p. 40.

[15] Charles Hutton-Brown, "Sebastian as Saint: the Hagiographical Sources of Sebastian Flyte." *Evelyn Waugh Newsletter*, 11(1971), p. 2.

[16] "St. Juliana Falconieri," *Saints*, 1965, p. 207.

[17] "Sacred Heart", *Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford: OUP, 1990).

[18] "St. Margaret Mary Alacoque," *Saints*, 1965, p. 229.

[19] Frank Kermode, "Mr. Waugh's Cities" in *Puzzles and Epiphanies: Essays and Reviews 1958-1961* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962), p. 167.

[20] John W. Osborne, "Hints of Charles Ryder's Conversion in 'Brideshead Revisited.'" *Evelyn Waugh Newsletter*, 22 (1988), pp. 4-5.

[21] Donald Greene, "Charles Ryder's Conversion?" *Evelyn Waugh Newsletter*, 22 (1988), pp. 4-7.

[22] Adrian Fortescue, *The Ceremonies of the Roman Rite Described: In Accordance With the Rubrics of Liturgical Books, the Decrees of the Congregation of Sacred Rites, the Code of Canon Law and Approved Authors* (London: Burns and Oates, 1918), p. 288.

[23] R. Colin Pickett, *Mental Affliction and Church Law: An Historical Synopsis of Roman and Ecclesiastical Law and a Canonical Commentary* (Ottawa: U of Ottawa P, 1952), pp. 119-121.

[24] Fortescue, pp. 285-88.

[25] It is not possible to give consistent, meaningful, or in some cases, any page numbers, when citing the manuscripts. Davis notes that the typescript "corresponds most closely to the 'Author's Edition' issued by Chapman and Hall in 1944 for distribution to Waugh's friends." A *Catalogue of the Evelyn Waugh Collection at the Humanities Research Center, the University of Texas at Austin* (Troy, NY: Whitston, 1981), p. 16.

[26] Gene D. Phillips, describes Lord Marchmain's deathbed scene thus: "when Father Mackay gives him absolution for his sins and anoints him with the oil of the Sacrament of the Sick" (P, 66). Phillips is a Jesuit but has used the post-Vatican II term for the Last Sacrament, or Extreme Unction, which is scarcely appropriate given both the period in which *Brideshead Revisited* is set, and the later one during which Waugh wrote. This is common knowledge to "average," lay Catholics, as David Lodge notes: "'I think maybe I should receive the Last Sacrament.' 'That's a good idea,' said Tess. 'Only we don't call it that any more. Or Extreme Unction. It's called the Sacrament of the Sick.'" David Lodge. *Paradise News* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1991), p. 243.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER IV

Helena: A Pilgrimage to Faith and Hope

[1] The *Itinerary of Bordeaux* or the *Itinerarium Burdigalense* is the account of the "Pilgrim of Bordeaux's" journey to Palestine in 333 A.D. He followed a route similar to Helena's, but took a much shorter time to reach Jerusalem. From "Itineraries," *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967-).

[2] Evelyn Waugh, *Edward Campion* (1935; rpt. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1954), pp. 7-8.

[3] Diocletian appears again, as the murderer of Sta. Dulcina, in *Sword of Honour*, p. 15.

[4] Monsignor Ronald Knox seems to have found a tendency to prolixity in Stopp's work: "It is said that Ronald Knox sent Waugh a telegram 'Stop Stopp Stop.'" Waugh suggested that 15,000 words be cut from Stopp's *Evelyn Waugh: Portrait of an Artist*. Stopp complied (L, 499).

[5] An extensive search of bibliographies of Greene's work, of periodical indexes and abstracts, and of likely periodicals, has failed to produce a review. It is possible that Greene simply wrote to Waugh.

[6] Sykes' homily would be more effective if his quotation were accurate. Boulay de la Meurthe (1761-1840) said of the execution of the Duc d'Enghien (1804) "C'est *pire* qu'un crime," not "plus." *Concise Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* (Oxford: OUP, 1981), p. 45.

[7] Conor Cruise O'Brien, *Maria Cross: Imaginative Patterns in a Group of Modern Catholic Writers* (London: Burns and Oates, 1963), p. 123.

[8] Malcolm Bradbury, *Evelyn Waugh* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1964), pp. 100-01.

[9] Waugh, asked by John Freeman which of his novels was his favourite and his best, replied "*Helena*." BBC TV "Face to Face." June 26, 1960.

[10] The sentence describing Lanctantius's opinion of the task of the writer also expresses Waugh's. His use of the word "kitten" is no more an accident than any of his choices. As Gene D. Phillips discovered when he visited Laura Waugh and "sat in the drawing room in front of the fire with Evelyn Waugh's favourite cat in my lap," Waugh liked cats. (P. 155).

[11] Laura Waugh's grandmother, Lady de Vesci, was a member of a group of aesthetes who worshipped art, the 'Souls' and "was in touch with all the arts." In Margaret Fitzherbert's *The Man Who was Greenmantle: A Biography of Aubrey Herbert*, (Oxford: OUP, 1985) p. 74.

[12] Paul Doyle, in his *Reader's Companion to the Novels and Short Stories of Evelyn Waugh* (Norman, OK: Pilgrim, 1988) p.67, incorrectly identifies "Alban" in this context, as "An old name for England." Without doubt Lactantius and Waugh are referring to St. Alban "venerated as the first martyr in the Island of Britain," according to *The Penguin Dictionary of Saints*, ed. Donald Attwater (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1965) p. 37.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER V

The Loved One and *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*:
Obsessions and Souls

[1] James F. Carens, *The Satiric Art of Evelyn Waugh* (Seattle: U of Washington P, 1966), p. 3.

[2] "Hinsley"/"Sword of the Spirit," *Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, (Oxford: OUP, 1990).

[3] "Manifest destiny," *Concise Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* (Oxford: OUP, 1982).

[4] Edmund Wilson, *Classics and Commercials: A Literary Chronicle of the Forties* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1950), p. 300.

[5] Wilson, pp. 304-05.

[6] Waugh describes the traditional version of the vigil at the altar of repose in *Sword of Honour*, p. 175. Both Mr. Crouchback and Guy take their turns.

[7] Clarissa Churchill apostatised when she married Anthony Eden, a divorcé, in 1952. Waugh was deeply saddened by her and for her (L, 378, 381-82).

[8] "For decades a vigorous liturgical movement had been going on, notably in such northern European countries as Belgium, Holland, Germany and France. In 1956, however, the movement had become so international as to lead to the momentous Assisi congress, which took place right in the Pope's own back yard and with his enthusiastic blessing." C.J. McNaspy, S.J., "Liturgy," in *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter M. Abbott, S.J. New York: Guild Press, 1966, p. 133. The fact that northern Europe, most particularly Germany, was the source of many of the new ideas, must particularly have distressed Waugh. Thence came the arch-criminal, Martin Luther. To add to his grief, Luther at least founded a new church, "renewal" was a movement from within.

[9] Dom van Zeller, Hubert. "Evelyn Waugh", *The Month*, 222 (1966), 70. Christopher Sykes wrote that Waugh "could not bear the thought of modernized liturgy. 'Untune that string', he felt, and loss of faith would follow. He felt so passionately that he seriously contemplated becoming a member of the Greek Uniat Church, a communion under papal authority but unaffected so far by the reform-movement. He was dissuaded by his close friend Dom Hubert van Zeller of Downside" (S, 595). The Uniat Churches are part of "Eastern Christendom in communion with Rome, which yet retain their respective languages, rites and canon law in accordance with the terms of their union; these usually provide for Communion in both kinds and marriage of the clergy," in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 1990, p. 526.

[10] "Inspired By an Artist Past," *The Sunday Times*, September 11, 1988, real estate section. John Jolliffe (EWHW, 232) makes the same point, but is less specific.

[11] Francis Crease, Waugh's teacher and mentor where illuminated manuscripts were concerned, "had rooms...in Lychpole Farm on the estate of the neighbouring squire named Tristram, with whom he had an undefined connection, either friendship or kinship" (LL, 147).

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER VI

Sword of Honour: Faith Without Hope

[1] I have used the recension, *Sword of Honour*, rather than the individual novels. As the title-page states, this is: "The final version of the novels." It is Waugh's last thoughts on the work.

[2] Walter M. Abbott, S.J., ed., *The Documents of Vatican II: With Notes and Comments by Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox Authorities* (New York: Guild Press, 1966), pp. ix, xv, 140-142. This extract shows how fundamental the liturgy was to the Church, and goes a long way to explain Waugh's intellectual and personal distress at the changes. It is bitterly ironic that all the documents of Vatican II were in Latin, whilst requiring vernaculars for the liturgy.

[3] Evelyn Waugh, *Remote People* (1931; rpt. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1985), p. 68.

[4] Andrew Rutherford, *The Literature of War: Five Studies in Heroic Virtue* (London: Macmillan, 1978), p. 129.

[5] Rutherford, p. 124. See Frederick Stopp, *Evelyn Waugh: Portrait of an Artist* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1958), p. 168.

[6] Evelyn Waugh, *The Life of the Right Reverend Ronald Knox* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1959), p. 326.

[7] Waugh, *Knox*, p. 326.

[8] "St. Teresa of Lisieux," *The Penguin Dictionary of Saints* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1965).

[9] On Thursday December 30, 1943, Waugh wrote that his first parachute jump was "the keenest pleasure I remember....one stepped into perfect silence and apparent immobility in bright sunshine above the treetops.... The first time I kicked myself; the second time somehow sat on my left leg and limped off the field thinking I had strained a muscle" (D, 556). Because of the secrecy of the parachute training he could write to Laura only that "I fell a great height twice and sprained my knee which is now in a splint" (L, 174).

[10] Hugh Ross Williamson, *The Great Prayer: Concerning the Canon of the Mass* (London: Collins, 1955), p. 137.

[11] It seems likely that Santa Dulcina is Portofino, Italian home of Laura Waugh's family, the Herberts, where Laura and Evelyn spent their honeymoon. The house, called Alta Chiara, the Italian for the English home Highclere, became the Villa Carnarvon, as the Crouchbacks' Villa Hermione became the Castello Crauccibac. *The Man Who Was Greenmantle* (Oxford: OUP, 1985) by Margaret Fitzherbert, née Waugh, Aubrey's granddaughter and second daughter of Evelyn and Laura, p. 7.

[12] It is interesting to note that Heath, using a Chapman and Hall edition of *Men at Arms* (1952) quotes this phrase as "a succession of peccant urchins." This, of course, makes complete sense. In the Chapman and Hall recension, *Sword of Honour* (1965) the phrase is "peasant urchins" as it is in Penguin's *Men at Arms*, and Penguin's *The Sword of Honour Trilogy*.

[13] "Purgatory," *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford: OUP, 1990).

[14] James J. Lynch, "An Allusion to Dante in 'Men at Arms'", *Evelyn Waugh Newsletter*, 18, No. 5 (1984), p.7.

[15] This passage occurs at the beginning of *Officers and Gentlemen*, Volume Two in the trilogy.

[16] Davis discusses the various endings to the several versions of the novel(s) (Da, 322-23).

[17] Waugh too wished his life would end. He wrote to Lady Diana Cooper, in September 1965:

> ...No, there's no 'reward' in this world. Perhaps retribution hereafter. A propos, can you give me the text and provenance of
>
> La vie est brêve (wish it were)
> Un peu d'espoir
> Un peu de rêve
> Et puis bonsoir (L, 634)

"Brêve," rather than "brève" is Waugh's mistake, unnoticed by Amory. See: Artemis Cooper, ed. *Mr Wu and Mrs Stitch: The Letters of Evelyn Waugh and Diana Cooper* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1991), p. 320.

[18] It is noteworthy that *aggiornamentò* more properly means 'updating' than 'renewal,' the word so repugnant to Waugh.

[19] Amory does not record the important fact that the date of this letter is Maundy Thursday, as the perpetual calendars of moveable feasts in many missals make readily available; see for example, *Missale Romanum ex Decreto Sacro sancti Concilii Tridenti Restitutum S. Pii V Pontificus Maximi Jussu Editum Aliorum Pontificum Cura Recognitum a Pio X Reformatum et Benedicti XV Auctoritate Vulgatum*. (New York: Benzinger, 1942), p. xxviii. Nor does Amory describe the nature of the periodical, *Clergy Review*, now called *Priests and People*, which gives a clear sense of its content and its lay and priestly audience. It is listed in the current *Ulrich's International Directory of Periodicals*.

FOOTNOTES

Conclusion

[1] Marie-Françoise Allain, *Conversations With Graham Greene*, trans. Guido Waldman (London: Penguin, 1991), p. 186.

[2] I am grateful to Father Fred Clay, C.S.B., Catholic Campus Ministry, St. Joseph's College, University of Alberta, for information about the restoration of the Tridentine rite, the use of Latin as a liturgical language and the permissions required for Masses to be said in the Tridentine rite.

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